

## Chinese ship waits at entrance to Gulf

DUBAI (R) — A Chinese ship suspected of carrying a cargo of chemical weapons materials to Iran was waiting Saturday outside the Straits of Hormuz at the entrance to the Gulf, a U.S. Navy spokesman said. Lieutenant Commander Bruce Cole said the U.S. Navy was maintaining surveillance of the vessel, which was in Iranian territorial waters. Monitoring included "visual sighting, radar contact, and could include aircraft surveillance," he said. "U.S. naval forces have done nothing to impede the progress of the Yinhai," spokesman Cole told Reuters. China's official Xinhua news agency, quoting officials at the China Ocean Shipping Corp., said the Yinhai would anchor 15 miles off Oman "to ensure the safety of the vessel and crew" and take on new supplies of fuel and water. The United States claims that the Yinhai is attempting to transport banned ingredients for chemical weapons to Iran. It has been tracking the ship and has vowed to inspect its cargo. Beijing says the Iran-bound containers contain only paper goods, hardware and machine parts and has accused Washington of acting like "a self-appointed international policeman" by interfering in the ship's voyage.

# Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation  
جوردين تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالإنجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية، الرأى

## Woman killed in Assiut shootout

ASSIUT (AP) — Muslim extremists ambushed a patrol car, and the gunfight when police returned fire killed a woman and wounded her nephew and a man sharing their taxi, authorities said Saturday. Salah Abdul Azim, chief prosecutor in the southern Egyptian village of Assiut, said neither the police nor the three gunmen were wounded. The attackers escaped, but Mr. Abdul Azim said they are Islamic extremists. The leader was identified as Ahmad Al-Senoussi, a fugitive trained as a lawyer who is wanted for two attacks on Al-Qusiya's police rest house in which two officers were slain. Mr. Abdul Azim also reported the arrests Saturday of two men suspected of being members with Mr. Senoussi of a six-man gang responsible for the second rest house attack, last Monday. Shooting erupted as the police cruiser made a routine patrol of Al-Qusiya's streets Friday night. A taxi carrying Soud Gomaa, 45, her eight-year-old nephew and a 20-year-old passenger blundered into the cross fire. All three were hit, but the driver Mrs. Gomaa's brother, escaped injury. The Interior Ministry in Cairo said Mrs. Gomaa died in a hospital. 24 acquitted; judge slams police, page 10

Volume 17 Number 5383

AMMAN SUNDAY, AUGUST 15, 1993 SAJR 25, 1414

Price: 150 Fils

## Speculation that Election Law might be changed shortly is scotched by officials

By Nermeen Murad  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Speculation is rife that the government of Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majah is about to recommend to His Majesty the King the adoption of a one-person-one-vote formula for the Nov. 8 elections but official sources insist that the enactment of a new law introducing the change would first have to pass through some constitutional stages which have not taken place yet.

According to the speculation, mainly by people close to the government but not members of it, the adoption of a new temporary law to govern the next elections would come by Monday. Members of the Cabinet, however, discount that possibility since they say they have not yet looked at any draft legislation, and they are not even aware that it exists.

It was expected that the proposed amendment would come up for Cabinet discussion during Saturday's regular cabinet meeting, but sources say that the Cabinet only discussed routine issues and decentralisation in government.

A temporary law, which is enacted only in the absence of Parliament, has to go through a somewhat lengthy procedure beginning with a first draft presented by the ministry concerned — in this case the Ministry of Interior — to the Prime Minister's diwan (office) of legislation and interpretation, which in turn forwards it to the justice minister for further study and consultations with other ministries.

The draft law is then sent to the full cabinet for debate and approval, before submitting it to the King, who would accept or reject it.

If Parliament is in session, however, the law would be turned over from the Cabinet to the House where it is discussed and ratified.

"The cabinet has not, as of yet, received any draft law for discussion," a senior official told the Jordan Times Friday. Theoretically, the law could be ratified by the Cabinet during one regular meeting of the Cabinet but the

senior official predicted that it would be discussed thoroughly "because it is an important and controversial law."

Controversy has surrounded the adoption of a one-person-one-vote system since it became apparent that the government was considering such a move.

Political parties and personalities have been lobbying the public as well as official circles to preempt the decision, with some going as far as preparing legal cases against the enactment of a temporary law.

The government reportedly toyed with the idea of effecting the change through executive orders, rather than issuing a new temporary law, but the proposed plan had to be abandoned apparently because it would have been unconstitutional.

Sources privy to official thinking said it was inevitable for the government to change the law after its commitment to do so has become well known to the public.

"The campaign for the change has reached its peak and it is apparent that with the approaching of the Aug. 15 deadline for registration the decision has to be announced very soon," one of the sources said. "The government's credibility rests on this change, and if it is not made today, it will be, tomorrow or sometime soon."

The change to the proposed system would mean that voters would be able to cast their vote in favour of only one candidate in their district regardless of the number of representatives allocated to the district. In the 1989 elections, every voter was able to vote in all his or her district's deputies, a number which varies from one area to another, thus enabling the organised groups, but mainly the Muslim Brotherhood, to win a large share of the vote.

Most political parties have announced their rejection of the imposition of a one-person-one-vote formula. The powerful Islamic Action Front (IAF), which predicts tough challenge from independent traditionalist candidates, even threatened to boycott the elections if the change was introduced.

Under the current bloc-voting system, the Muslim Brotherhood movement, which is the backbone of the IAF, was able to form alliances that enabled it to win 23 seats in the 1989 elections.

The change, if it is made, would deny the IAF the opportunity to form such alliances and therefore is unlikely to win more than 17-20 seats, according to analysts.

The government might have changed the law earlier, except for the concern about well-organised groups such as the IAF being able to mobilise their forces to offset the impact of the change, well-informed sources have maintained.

"It is therefore possible that the government has waited this long (first until the July 31 deadline for voter transfer from one district to another and then until the Aug. 15 deadline for registering voters have passed) before issuing the temporary law," one of those sources said.

Other, equally well-informed sources, predict that the government might opt to delay its announcement for even longer time "to guard against linking the dissolution of the Lower House of parliament to the impending change." One of the sources said the government "wants to maintain an image of being democratic." The 11th parliament was dissolved Aug. 4.

Opposition to the proposed law has unified the most unlikely political forces in the country who joined hands over the past few weeks to lobby against the amendment.

The IAF has been careful to say that it would boycott the next elections in case the law was changed to its detriment but the front still hopes to rally a similar position from other political parties before making such a move so that the boycott would "be politically effective."

To this effect, the IAF has held meetings with influential political personalities who have also expressed their opposition to the amendment. The latest meeting was held late last week with former Prime Minister Taher Al Masri, former Irbid Deputy Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh, Com-

munist Karak Deputy Issa Mdanat and Amman Deputy Faris Nabulsi. Representing the IAF in this meeting was Irbid Deputy Abdul Rahim Akour.

Sources close to the meeting maintain that there was no discussion of preempting the decision to issue a new law but the conferees sought to lay down strategy to guard against boycott by any political party and the "resurgence of tribalism."

Analysts have said that the proposed change is certain to tip the balance in favour of independent and traditionalist candidates and away from political parties' candidates. This analysis has encouraged many tribes in the Kingdom to coordinate their efforts and choose a representative from one tribe or another. Faced with this problem, political parties have integrated the tribal formula into their choice of candidates.

"It is too late to sit down and prepare to stop the law," a source close to last week's meeting told the Jordan Times. "This meeting, like many others that are taking place among concerned politicians, was to prepare for the next step," the source stressed, quashing earlier reports that the deputies who attended had sought to join forces and lobby against the enactment of a new law.

The IAF, during its meetings with the leftists and influential independents, has been advised against boycotting the elections, and to focus instead on efforts to maintain the "integrity" of the elections, the source continued.

Earlier, representatives of political parties and opposition figures as well as former deputies met in a bid to consider what to do on any "unconstitutional or illegal" government action concerning the controversial legislation.

At a meeting they held Tuesday, the majority of participants agreed to meet Saturday to continue coordination on the subject of changing the law but very few agreed with the organisers at the meeting, Leith Shbeilat, that the dissolution of parliament was "unconstitutional and politically dangerous" (see story below).

## Some deputies pursue legal challenge to possible changes to Election Law

By Ayman Al Safadi  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A number of former members of the Lower House of Parliament Saturday renewed their threats to take the government to court if it changes the Election Law through a temporary legislation and legal experts say the deputies will have a legal case.

At a meeting to draft a plan of action to challenge a possible unilateral government decision to change the law, 14 deputies failed to agree on boycotting the elections if the government changed the law but decided to contest such decision in court, according to former independent Islamist Deputy Leith Shbeilat, who hosted the meeting.

The former Muslim Brotherhood, leftist and centrist legislators agreed to invite other former members of the House and heads of political parties to another meeting at the Brotherhood's office to discuss the issue on Tuesday.

Saturday's discussions were a follow up on a meeting held Wednesday after which Mr.

Shbeilat claimed that at least 25 former lawmakers approved of a statement condemning the Aug. 4 dissolution of the House as unconstitutional and warning of a legal action against the government if it changed the Election Law.

But deputies who participated in that meeting later told the Jordan Times that they did not agree with Mr. Shbeilat that the dissolution of Parliament was unconstitutional. "We only agreed to hold further meetings on the issue of changing the Election Law," one of them said.

Mr. Shbeilat commented that despite the low turnout at Saturday's meeting, he was "certain of the support of at least 30 to 40 legislators."

Jordan's largest political party, the Islamic Action Front (IAF), has earlier threatened to boycott the polls if they were to be held under a new law.

The government has not yet announced a decision on whether a change of the law is in the making but there are many indications that it is heading in that direction.

Mr. Shbeilat and the IAF said

they will contest the change on the grounds that it would be unconstitutional for the government to change the law through a provisional legislation.

The Constitution empowers King Hussein to issue temporary legislation in extraordinary situations, on the recommendation of the government. Opponents of the change say these situations do not exist now and the government could have presented any new legislation to the House had it not been dissolved. The mandate of the 11th Parliament would have ended on Nov. 23.

A prominent Jordanian lawyer told the Jordan Times Saturday that the deputies will have a case if they meet two conditions. First if they cite the dissolution of Parliament as a prelude to introducing the temporary legislation. Second, if the court decided that it was within its jurisdiction to determine whether the extraordinary situations in which the Constitution allows for provisional laws existed or not.

Former Cabinet member and lawyer Taher Hikmat said that before looking into the case, a

court will have to decide whether determining the existence of the extraordinary situation existed or not is an act of sovereignty that only the political power can rule on or a part of its jurisdiction as a court of justice.

And while there are legal arguments for both cases, Mr. Hikmat said more legal experts agree that deciding on that point is within the authority of courts.

Accordingly, "the deputies will have a case," if they contest a temporary legislation through which the government might change the Election Law, Mr. Hikmat said.

Opponents of changing the law, however, are not restricting their arguments to legal considerations. Politics figures high on their argument.

They say that changing the law will be "a blow" to the democratic process in the country and will bode ill for its future.

Changing the law against the will of the majority of the country's political forces, they say, cast doubt on the credibility of the government and the democratisation process.

Several Arab countries, mainly Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Syria, have already sent tents, blankets, mattresses, medicines and food to families in South Lebanon.

Dr. Abdul Meguid said the Arab League welcomed Beirut sending 300 troops south last Monday as such steps could stabilise the area but guerrillas should continue to resist Israel's occupation of Lebanon.

"Resistance of any occupation is legal," he told reporters at Beirut airport. "There is an occupation and this occupation must be resisted."



FRIENDLY ENCOUNTER: Pakistan's caretaker Premier Moeen Qureshi (right) chats with former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto (left) during the Pakistani Independence Day ceremony Saturday. Former Speaker of the National assembly Gohar Ayub (centre) under Nawaz Sharif's regime also attended the flag hoisting ceremony (AFP photo)

## U.S., Britain and France serve ultimatum on Libya

Combined agency dispatches

UNITED NATIONS — America, Britain and France say they will try to freeze Libya's financial assets and ban its purchase of oil equipment if Tripoli does not turn over two suspects in an airline bombing by Oct. 1.

The three nations, while endorsing the continuation of economic sanctions, said in a statement Friday that they would introduce "a resolution strengthening the sanctions in key oil-related, financial and technological areas" (see text on page 2).

Their statement, read by U.S. Ambassador Madeleine K. Albright, did not explicitly mention a ban on Libyan oil sales — an embargo that would be opposed by Italy and other European nations which depend on Libyan oil.

The U.S. administration had sought tougher terms, a 30-day deadline and an oil embargo, but Britain and France only would consider a ban on oil equipment sales to Libya, according to diplomatic sources. They spoke on condition of anonymity.

The Western diplomats said that the warning referred to a freezing of Libyan financial assets abroad, imports of oil-related equipment to Libya and other technology.

The statement by the three allies was issued after the 15-

member Security Council extended the aviation, arms and diplomatic sanctions against Libya for a fifth time.

The Libyan government remained silent on the affair Saturday.

"There is no comment at the present time," said a Foreign Ministry official in Tripoli contacted by Reuters over the phone from Tunis.

Libyan media had not reported the ultimatum 12 hours after it was delivered.

Recently progress has been reported in arranging the surrender of the men.

On Aug. 4, a U.N. spokesman said the United Nations and Libya were making progress in negotiations to bring the two Libyans to trial in Britain. Libyan Foreign Minister Omar Mustafa Al Muntasser conferred earlier this month with Secretary-General Boutros Ghali and averted a new Libyan proposal.

Dr. Ghali said later it calls for the men to be delivered for trial.

Joe Sills, chief spokesman for Dr. Ghali, told reporters that Libya wants a U.N. delegation to visit Tripoli to verify that there are no "terrorist" training camps in the country and to make arrangements for the two suspects' extradition.

In another sign that the dispute would be resolved, a Libyan official said Monday that his country

is willing to pay compensation to the families whose relatives died in the Pan Am bombing.

Not all council members favour toughening the sanctions. The resolution imposing the existing curbs was adopted by a vote of only 10 in favour, with five abstentions.

This was only one vote more than the minimum of nine needed to pass a resolution, in the absence of a big-power veto.

Those abstaining were China, Cape Verde, India, Morocco and Zimbabwe. All are still council members except Zimbabwe, since replaced by Djibouti, and India, replaced by Pakistan.

During Friday's closed-door review, Pakistan's representative agreed to maintain the original sanctions but said his government "does not support the imposition of any additional sanctions on Libya."

Speaking to reporters after closed consultations about the sanctions, Ms. Albright, the Security Council president, said: "There was no agreement that the necessary conditions existed for the modification," of sanctions.

As usual, there was no open meeting or vote.

The United States and Britain have indicted the two Libyans in connection with the Pan Am bombing.

## Jordan holding 10 for plot against the King

AMMAN (Agencies) — The Jordanian authorities have been holding 10 people for months on suspicion they were plotting to assassinate King Hussein at a university ceremony in June, international news agencies said Saturday.

Official sources quoted by Reuters, Agence France Presse and the Association Press said they were members of the banned Islamic Liberation Party. The party's spokesman and his assistants, Ata Abu Rushteh and Bakir Khawaldeh, were detained on May 23, weeks after most of the others, the reports said.

They said 31 students and members of the Mu'ta University staff were arrested April 15 after the plot was uncovered. Twenty-three suspects have been freed, most of them this week, after extensive interrogation.

Eight cadets remain in jail and two are at large, the officials said. The 10 will be formally charged at a public session of a special State Security Court. But the date for the hearing has not yet been fixed, they said.

All those arrested in April were suspected members of the ILF, which seeks to establish an Islamic state in Jordan, the agency reports said.

The arrests were first reported last month by their families and the Cairo-based Arab Organisation for Human Rights, which complained that 31 suspects were being held without charge.

The detainees, most of them students at Mu'ta University,

were moved to a military jail earlier this month and will probably stand trial after Aug. 20, they said.

Relatives quoted in the reports said the authorities would also try them for membership of an illegal Islamic group.

The government has declined comment on the detentions. "We have nothing to say," an official spokesman was quoted as saying by Reuters.

Information Minister Ma'n Abu Nowar confirmed to the AP that arrests have been made in a state security matter, but would give no details.

"My information is that the issue is in the hands of the judiciary, but I cannot say anything more than this," Dr. Abu Nowar told the AP.

The Security officials had no details about how the plot was to be implemented, but said the men planned to assassinate King Hussein, 57, June 26 during the graduation ceremony at Mu'ta University, 130 kilometres south of Amman.

Nawaf Jdeifat, a businessman in Zarqa, 25 kilometres northeast of Amman, told AP Saturday that his son Fouad, 21, was among those still in jail.

He said that another son, Jihad, a police officer at Mu'ta, was released Tuesday.

Al Mustafa Jidi, a contractor in Irbid, said his son, Hussein, 19, an electrical engineering student at Mu'ta "disappeared in April,

(Continued on page 3)

## Arab League, U.N. discuss Lebanon aid

BEIRUT (Agencies) — Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdul Meguid held talks with Lebanese leaders Saturday on ways of speeding up Arab aid to South Lebanon, devastated in an Israeli assault last month.

Also Saturday, a senior United Nations envoy flew in on a four-day visit to inspect the damage inflicted on Lebanon during the week-long aerial, naval and ground bombardments.

Jan Eliasson, the U.N. undersecretary-general for humanitarian affairs, told reporters at the airport he plans to work closely with a U.N. team which

has been in Lebanon for a week to assess the damage in southern villages and towns.

Shortly after his arrival, Mr. Eliasson held talks with President Elias Hrawi and Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri.

Dr. Abdul Meguid, on his first visit to Lebanon as secretary-general of the Arab League, met separately with Mr. Hrawi, Mr. Hariri, Foreign Minister Faris Bouez and Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri.

He left after the talks.

"I am fully prepared to undertake whatever effort is required to implement Arab League re-

solutions providing for aid to Lebanon," Dr. Abdul Meguid said upon arrival at Beirut airport at 10:30 a.m. (0730 GMT).

After meeting Mr. Hrawi, Dr. Abdul Meguid said he plans to dispatch an envoy to several Arab countries before he begins a tour in the region to collect the promised aid.

He said it was not yet decided whether Mr. Hariri would accompany him, as earlier press reports suggested.

The foreign ministers of Arab League countries have promised \$500 million in aid to Lebanon following the Israeli blitz against

guerrillas in the south.

Several Arab countries, mainly Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Syria, have already sent tents, blankets, mattresses, medicines and food to families in South Lebanon.

Dr. Abdul Meguid said the Arab League welcomed Beirut sending 300 troops south last Monday as such steps could stabilise the area but guerrillas should continue to resist Israel's occupation of Lebanon.

"Resistance of any occupation is legal," he told reporters at Beirut airport. "There is an occupation and this occupation must be resisted."

## Arafat adviser proposes Jericho government

Combined agency dispatches

PARIS (R) — A senior aide to Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat has proposed that the PLO establish a provisional government under Mr. Arafat's leadership in the occupied West Bank town of Jericho.

"I suggest the formation of a provisional Palestinian government including people from the occupied territories and the PLO, perhaps also some members of its Executive Committee," Bassam Abu Sharif told the French daily Liberation in an interview published Saturday.

Mr. Abu Sharif said Mr. Arafat would head the government; which he said "could in the near future negotiate the final stage of the peace process in order to resolve problems in a more efficient way."

He said the provisional government could be based in Jericho on the West Bank.

Mr. Abu Sharif, a political adviser to Mr. Arafat, said he believed the plan could help break the deadlock in the talks over the future of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Speaking to Israeli army radio in a telephone interview from Tunis Saturday, Mr. Abu Sharif said it was his personal plan and that he had discussed it with others in the PLO.

Israeli Cabinet Minister Chaim Ramon immediately rejected the idea, saying it violated the Israeli-Palestinian agreement to move towards a settlement in two stages.

Under that agreement, Palestinians and Israelis are to negotiate a formula for limited Palestinian self-rule in the occupied territories, and in the third year of autonomy talks on the final status of the territories are to begin.

But Palestinians want stronger assurances that autonomy would not be the end of the road for them. Several compromise proposals have emerged, including the idea of Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho before an interim settlement has been worked out.

Mr. Abu Sharif proposed that the joint government would have "temporary headquarters in Jericho, until the occupations ended and the final status and full sovereignty of the Palestinians in the occupied territories is achieved."

Mr. Abu Sharif also called on the Israeli government to stop its "game of hide and seek" and negotiate directly with the PLO.

Israel still refuses, though it has been edging closer to recognising the PLO through a series of meetings between cabinet ministers and PLO officials.

Last week, the PLO named seven of the Palestinian negotiators with Israel to a PLO committee, and said the seven now officially represented the organisation.

"They (the negotiators) were always members of the PLO, but if you like it, it is now public and official," Mr. Abu Sharif said Saturday.

Israeli officials have ignored the declarations about the delegates' status. Israel has acknowledged that the Palestinian negotiators get their instructions from Tunis. But it stops short of talking to Mr. Arafat himself for fear he would raise a new set of demands and be unwilling to stay within the two-stage formula.

Asked by Liberation if the negotiating team might be reshuffled, Mr. Abu Sharif said, "the delegation will continue its work until there is a qualitative change in relations between the PLO and the Israeli government. And I think that will happen quickly."

"Conditions are ripe so that very quickly there could be new contacts between PLO officials and members of the Israeli government," Mr. Abu Sharif said.

Mr. Abu Sharif said last week's PLO crisis was one of logistics because the negotiators lived in Jerusalem and the PLO leadership was in Tunis.

The Arafat aide said the talks were entering a key period "which should lead to something concrete before the end of the year."



## Glimmer of progress appears on Mideast peace

By Paul Eddle  
Reuters

**TUNIS** — A glimmer of progress has appeared on the Middle East peace. Israel has taken new strides towards direct talks with Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and the Palestinians have reorganised their leadership to be ready for hard decisions.

A leadership crisis among the Palestinians ended Thursday with Yasser Arafat conceding seats on a top PLO committee to peace delegates from the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

That means Israel will be negotiating with the PLO when peace talks resume in Washington on Aug. 30, as looks likely.

Israel, which used to dismiss the PLO as "terrorists", barely blinked. "For us it doesn't matter," Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said. "It's the same members of the delegation, the same names, the same people, the same procedure."

The Palestinians also decided to form "reference bodies" throughout the occupied territories and revive a "national dialogue," aiming to rally ordinary Palestinians to support the peace process and keep even opponents informed.

The moves do not solve the basic argument over how much independence Israel is ready to give Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, the

issue at the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

But they begin to create a framework in which a fair compromise could be made and then successfully sold to the Palestinians in the occupied territories and scattered through the Middle East and the rest of the world.

If Israel fully accepts the PLO, officials in exile as well as delegates from the occupied territories, the Jewish state would finally be negotiating with the leaders most Palestinians regard as their legitimate representatives: The people authorised to make a deal.

"I see the emergency of a possible historic outcome," PLO strategist Nabil Shaath said. "In every case of decolonisation that you know and in every case of serious people-to-people conflict, the real breakthrough comes when the occupied recognises the outside leadership of the occupied."

The Israeli taboo on negotiating with the PLO has been melting away since a law banning contacts with it was repealed in January. Environment Minister Yossi Sarid met Dr. Shaath in Cairo last month.

The Palestinians hope dialogue with the PLO will make it possible to start negotiations now on a final settlement in the West Bank and Gaza, breaking the deadlock in the official peace talks on a five-year interim period of Palestinian self-rule.

The biggest obstacles to progress on the interim period are fears of pre-empting the final settlement.

Israelis block anything that might support future Palestinian claims to an independent state. Palestinians refuse anything which might admit future Israeli claims to any of the occupied land.

If the deadlock can be broken, the new organisations set up by the Palestinians to inform and involve their people will be vital to convince a sceptical, even despairing public.

"We should take into consideration that maybe in a short period of time we should take hard decisions," Yasser Abed-Rabbo, a member of the PLO's Executive Committee, told Reuters on Thursday.

"If we cannot have a referendum, if we cannot have a way to ask the people about their position, we should find some ways of contacting the people and telling them."

"It is not enough to have a meeting of the (Palestine) Central Council and say we discussed everything there. There are people in every place, in every region, who feel they are interested and feel they should share the responsibility of taking the decisions," he said.

Movement on the Palestinian issue would immediately produce progress in negotiations between Israel and the other Arabs — Syria, Lebanon and Jordan.



**RELIEVED:** Marin and Khadija, daughters of one of the fundamentalists on trial for the assassination of parliament Speaker Rifai Al Mahjoub, visit their father Saturday. The high state security court acquitted all 24 Islamic militants after excluding evidence obtained through torture but it sentenced 10 of them to jail terms ranging from 3 years to 15 for carrying weapons and forged papers (AFP photo)

## U.S. letter demanded Demjanjuk's release

**WASHINGTON (Agencies)** — The U.S. embassy in Israel has written the Israeli government that the continued detention of John Demjanjuk may violate its extradition treaty with the United States, according to a copy of the letter obtained by the World Jewish Congress (WJC).

The letter, signed and delivered to Israel's justice ministry by Paul B. van Son, first secretary of the U.S. embassy in Tel Aviv, requested "an official and legal explanation" as to why Demjanjuk, the retired Ohio autoworker recently acquitted by Israel's supreme court of Nazi war crimes, was still in prison.

Mr. Van Son wrote Ruth Rubin, an official at the Justice Ministry, that he was acting at the request of State Department lawyers. The content of the three-paragraph letter was provided to a reporter Friday by the World Jewish Congress.

"They expressed to me concern that the government of Israel may be in violation of the 'specialty rule' of the U.S.-Israel treaty," Mr. Van Son said in the letter.

The State Department said Friday that the letter was unauthorised and refused to repudiate its contents.

The WJC said the letter's call for Demjanjuk's release may have unduly influenced Israeli attorney general Yosef Harish into deciding this week against further prosecutions of the man acquitted of being guard at the Treblinka camp.

"It may be that John Demjanjuk is being released on the basis of a crude deception," WJC Vice-President Kalman Sultanski said of the letter from a first secretary.

The State Department said the letter was sent by the U.S. embassy in Tel Aviv without high-level authorisation.

But it added, "although the letter was prepared and sent without the knowledge or approval of officials in Washington, the issues raised in the letter have been the subject of informal discussions between our governments for

some time..." While the WJC said the letter appeared to have unduly influenced Mr. Harish, some sources in the Jewish community wondered whether Mr. Harish wanted such a letter to help bolster his controversial decision not to seek further prosecutions of Demjanjuk.

The Israeli supreme court is expected to decide by next week whether Demjanjuk, 73, will be prosecuted on charges that he was a guard at other camps or released — probably to the United States where he is appealing the extradition order that sent him to Israel in 1985.

WJC sources said Thursday that the day before Mr. Harish was to announce his decision the Justice Ministry received a letter from a first secretary at the U.S. embassy.

On Friday the WJC released a copy of the letter written by Mr. van Son. It said in part:

"If Mr. Demjanjuk continues to be detained by order of the (Israeli) supreme court beyond the hearing presently scheduled for August 11, I wish to inform you that I have been requested orally by attorneys in the Department of State to ask the Ministry of Justice for an official and legal explanation of why the ministry does not believe this detention to be a violation of article 13 of the extradition treaty."

The letter was passed on to the Justice Ministry and was taken into consideration by Mr. Harish in making his decision, the WJC said.

The Cincinnati-based sixth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled last week that Demjanjuk, 73, should be able to return while the court investigates his 1985 extradition to Israel. The court said it needs Demjanjuk to participate in the investigation.

The court is to hear arguments Sept. 3 about whether the Justice Department withheld information Demjanjuk could have used to fight his extradition.

## Hizbollah commemorates Obeid abduction

**JIBSHEET, Lebanon (AP)** — Hizbollah (Party of God) Friday commemorated the abduction of one of its clerics by Israeli troops four years ago with a pledge to keep up its armed struggle against Israel.

Sheikh Abdul Karim Obeid, a mosque preacher and Hizbollah member, was taken from his home in the village of Jibsheet on July 28, 1989, by helicopter-borne Israeli commandos.

To mark the occasion, Sheikh Naim Qassem, deputy leader of the Shiite Muslim group, led a rally in Jibsheet's main mosque. Some 250 people, including Sheikh Obeid's four young children, attended the gathering.

"Resistance is an act of fighting and confronting the enemy," Sheikh Qassem said. "This is our choice."

He called for financial support from the Lebanese people and government to help sustain the armed resistance and the civilian population facing Israeli reprisals.

Jibsheet, a major Hizbollah stronghold, took the brunt of

week-long Israeli air, naval and artillery attacks in late July that destroyed 70 villages in South Lebanon, killed nearly 150 people and wounded about 500. Nearly 500,000 people were displaced in the campaign.

The offensive was triggered by guerrilla attacks against Israeli troops occupying the so-called "security zone" in South Lebanon and rocket barrages across the border.

The Israeli campaign was halted by a U.S.-brokered ceasefire July 30.

Sheikh Qassem urged the Beirut government to "leave no effort at all international levels to bring the release of Sheikh Obeid and all the (holy fighters) held by Israel."

Hizbollah claims to hold at least two Israeli servicemen captured in an ambush in South Lebanon Feb. 17, 1986. Sheikh Obeid's release has been a key demand by the group.

Israel believes the two soldiers, Yossi Fink and Rahamin Alsheikh, died after their capture

from wounds they suffered during the ambush.

Israel, has reportedly demanded accurate information on the two servicemen as well as airman Ron Arad who was captured when his jet fighter was downed in South Lebanon Oct. 16, 1986.

Sheikh Obeid's 11-year-old son, Sajid, addressed Friday's rally. He said: "We, Sheikh Obeid's four children, plead with international and humanitarian organisations to obtain our father's freedom like they worked for the release of the Western hostages."

Some 90 foreigners were abducted in Lebanon during the civil war which ended in 1990. The last Western hostages, two German relief workers, were released in Beirut June 17, 1992.

"Is it fair that foreign hostages return to their families while we remain without our father?" said Sheikh Obeid's eldest son.

The cleric's daughter, Mujahida, 5 and two other sons Mujahid, 10, and Mujtabah, 6, sat in the crowd.

## Text of statement warning Libya

**FOLLOWING** is the text of a statement issued Friday by the United States, Britain and France threatening tougher sanctions against Libya unless by Oct. 1 it surrenders for trial two suspects in the 1988 bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, which killed 270 people.

Over 16 months have passed since the Security Council imposed sanctions on the government of Libya for failure to comply with its demands as set forth in United Nations Security Council Resolution 731 that Libya commit itself concretely and definitively to cease all forms of terrorist action and all assistance to terrorist groups, agree to surrender the two accused of bombing Pan Am 103 for trial in Scotland or the U.S., respond fully to the requests put forward by the French judge investigating the bombing of UTA 772, and provide evidence or information about the bombings of Pan Am 103 and UTA 772.

Today, for the fourth time, the council has reviewed Libyan compliance with sanctions as called for in U.N. Security Council Resolution 748 and found Libya once again to be in defiance of the will of the international community. Instead of seeking ways to cooperate with the council and the U.N. secretary-general, Libya has consistently sought ways to avoid full compliance.

The U.S., U.K. and France have observed with diminishing patience that the U.N. secretary-general's envoys to Tripoli repeatedly come back empty-handed, without indications of compliance although with many assurances of Libya's cooperation. We have waited the four months requested by the Arab League secretary-general who wished to serve as an intermediary between the international com-

munity and the Libyans. We have repeatedly rejected Libyan efforts to distract the international community from its lack of compliance with empty offers to surrender the Lockerbie suspects and to comply with the requirements of French justice and to prove their partial compliance with the Security Council's demands.

However, our three governments, in the interests of giving Libya one last chance, have asked the U.N. secretary-general to look into the matter and take the necessary steps, to achieve the full implementation by the Libyan government of Resolution 731 within 40 to 45 days.

If, by October 1, the Libyan government has failed to comply with resolutions 731 and 748, including the transfer to U.S. or U.K. jurisdiction of the Lockerbie suspects and compliance with the requests of French justice on UTA 772, we will table a resolution strengthening the sanctions in key oil-related, financial, and technological areas.

Once more, our three governments reiterate that they have no hidden agenda and that, on the contrary, upon full implementation by Libya of Security Council resolutions 731 and 748, the conditions would be met for the lifting of sanctions by the Security Council.

### List of sanctions

The following mandatory sanctions have been in force against Libya since April 15, 1992.

They were imposed by Security Council Resolution 748 (1992), adopted on March 31, 1992, by a vote of 10 in favour and none against, with five abstentions. It gave Libya a two-week grace period before the sanctions went into effect.

### Air embargo

All countries must prohibit any planes from using their territory or airspace on their way to or from Libya, unless a Security Council sanctions committee grants an exception on humanitarian grounds.

Also banned are the supply to Libya of any aircraft or aircraft parts, engineering or maintenance services for Libyan planes, any certification of airworthiness, new insurance for Libyan aircraft or the payment of claims against existing insurance contracts.

### Arms embargo

All countries must bar the sale or transfer to Libya of arms and related material of all types, including ammunition, military vehicles, paramilitary police equipment, as well as spare parts for any of those items.

They are also barred from providing Libya with any technical advice or training related to the supply, manufacture, maintenance or use of those items, and must withdraw any of their officials advising Libya on military matters.

### Diplomatic embargo

All countries must significantly reduce the number and level of staff at Libyan diplomatic and consular missions on their territory and restrict the movement of those staff who remain. In the case of international organisations, the host government may consult the organisation concerned on what measures to carry out.

All countries must also prevent the operation of any Libyan Arab Airlines offices.

They must deny entry to, or expel, Libyans who have been denied entry to, or expelled from, other countries because of their involvement in "terrorist" activities.



Children of Sheikh Abdul Karim Obeid, a pro-Israeli Hizbollah leader who was kidnapped four years ago by the Israeli army in southern Lebanon, stand Friday under an effigy of their father, who is still held in Israel (AFP photo)

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Turks say rebels suffer heavy losses

**ISTANBUL (R)** — Turkish troops inflicted heavy casualties on rebel Kurds in fighting near the Iranian border on Friday, the Anatolia news agency reported. It quoted officials as saying soldiers, warplanes and helicopter gunships struck against members of the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) near the town of Yuksekova in Hakkari province. Officials said the operations began after large groups of PKK guerrillas in a gunbattle near the town of Cukurca, also in Hakkari province, security officials said. They said the fighting occurred on Thursday night after rebels raided a gendarmerie post near the Iraqi border. Six commandos were wounded in the fighting.

### Denktash warns EC on Cyprus entry

**ISTANBUL (R)** — Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash has warned the European Community (EC) that Cyprus' application for full membership of the community is illegal, the Anatolia news agency reported Friday. It said Mr. Denktash stated in a letter to EC Commission President Jacques Delors that the Cypriot bid was unlawful because the Turkish Cypriots had not been consulted. Mr. Denktash, president of the breakaway Turkish republic of northern Cyprus which is recognised only by Turkey, also said U.N.-sponsored talks on reunifying the island would be endangered and its division legalised if the EC accepted Cyprus' membership. Anatolia did not say when the letter was sent. Cyprus has been divided since Turkish troops invaded and occupied the northern two-fifths of 1974 after a short-lived coup backed by the junta then ruling Athens aimed at uniting the island with Greece. The Republic of Cyprus in the south, which is internationally recognised as the sole government, applied for full EC membership on July 3, 1990. EC officials say Cyprus is eligible for membership but negotiations will start once a settlement of the Cyprus problem is assured.

### Dietician jailed for trying to poison food

**NICOSIA (R)** — A dietician was sentenced to one year in jail Friday after a Cypriot court found her guilty of attempting to poison health foods. Maria Martin, 50, chief dietician at Nicosia hospital, was caught red-handed last January trying to sprinkle acetone, used as a nail polish remover, on foodstuffs in a local supermarket. The reason for her action was to discredit the company which was supplying the supermarket, the court said. The company was competing with that of her husband.

### JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

**PROGRAMME TWO**

17:30 ..... Le monde est a vous  
19:00 ..... News in French  
19:15 ..... Le Journal de L'histoire  
19:30 ..... News in Hebrew  
20:00 ..... News in Arabic  
20:30 ..... Step by Step  
21:10 ..... The Dream Machine  
22:00 ..... News in English  
22:20 ..... French series

**PRAYER TIMES**

04:30 ..... Fajr  
05:35 ..... (Sunrise) Dhuha  
12:40 ..... Dhuhur  
16:28 ..... 'Asr  
19:26 ..... Maghrib  
20:50 ..... 'Isha

**CHURCHES**

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swetfieh, Tel. 810740  
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 637785  
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590  
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440  
De la Sufle Church Tel. 661757  
Terrence Church Tel. 622366  
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543  
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331  
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261  
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751  
Armenian International Church Tel. 625736  
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328  
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Tel. 624922  
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

**WEATHER**

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Normal summer weather will prevail and winds will be northwesterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.  
Amman ..... 17 / 32  
Aqaba ..... 25 / 39  
Djordan ..... 15 / 35  
Jordan Valley ..... 22 / 38

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 31, Aqaba 38. Humidity readings: Amman 53 per cent. Aqaba 34 per cent.

### JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

**USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

**NIGHT DUTY**

AMMAN:  
Dr. Walid Al Masri ..... 675485  
Dr. Saad Tawfiq ..... 788285  
Dr. Mustafa Huzailah ..... 626424  
Dr. Riza Abu Zeina ..... 894395  
Firas pharmacy ..... 661912  
Ferdows pharmacy ..... 778336  
Al Asena pharmacy ..... 637055  
Nairoukh pharmacy ..... 636672  
Al Saban pharmacy ..... 636730  
Yacoub pharmacy ..... 644945  
Smeicani pharmacy ..... 637640  
Najib pharmacy ..... 847632

IRBID:  
Dr. Mohammad Al Zuhri .....  
Alquds pharmacy .....  
ZARQA:  
Dr. Hisham Hiyasat ..... 982440  
Khalifah pharmacy ..... 985417

**EMERGENCIES**

Food Control Centre ..... 637111

Civil Defence Department ..... 661111  
Civil Defence Immediate ..... 630341  
Civil Defence Emergency ..... 199  
Rescue Police ..... 192, 621111, 637777  
Fire Brigade ..... 891228  
Blood Bank ..... 843402  
Highway Police ..... 775121  
Traffic Police ..... 896390  
Public Security Department ..... 630321  
Hotel Complaints ..... 605800  
Price Complaints ..... 661176  
Water and Sewerage ..... 637229  
Complaints ..... 897467  
Amman Municipality ..... 787111  
Complaints ..... 010230  
Telephone Information (directory assistance) ..... 121  
Overseas Calls ..... 010230  
Central Amman Telephone

Repairs ..... 623101  
Abdell Telephone Repairs ..... 661101  
Jordan Television ..... 773111  
Radio Jordan ..... 774111  
Water Authority ..... 680100  
Jordan Electricity Authority ..... 815615  
Electric Power Company ..... 636381  
RJ Flight Information ..... 08-53200  
Queen Alia Intl. Airport ..... 08-53200

### FOR THE TRAVELLER

#### QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

**ARRIVALS**  
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

05:30 ..... Bangkok (RJ)  
07:00 ..... Aqaba (RJ)  
07:30 ..... Damascus (RJ)  
08:30 ..... Jeddah (RJ)  
09:00 ..... Doha, Abu Dhabi (RJ)  
09:30 ..... Beirut (RJ)  
10:00 ..... Istanbul (RJ)  
10:30 ..... Athens (RJ)  
11:00 ..... Riyadh (RJ)  
11:30 ..... Aqaba (RJ)  
12:00 ..... Damascus (RJ)  
12:30 ..... New Delhi (RJ)  
13:00 ..... Singapore, Jakarta (RJ)  
13:30 ..... Bangkok (RJ)  
14:00 ..... Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)  
14:30 ..... Sana'a (RJ)

**DEPARTURES**  
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

07:00 ..... Beirut (RJ)  
07:30 ..... Aqaba (RJ)  
08:00 ..... Damascus (RJ)  
08:30 ..... Jeddah (RJ)  
09:00 ..... Doha, Abu Dhabi (RJ)  
09:30 ..... Istanbul (RJ)  
10:00 ..... Athens (RJ)  
10:30 ..... Riyadh (RJ)  
11:00 ..... Aqaba (RJ)  
11:30 ..... Damascus (RJ)  
12:00 ..... New Delhi (RJ)  
12:30 ..... Singapore, Jakarta (RJ)  
13:00 ..... Bangkok (RJ)  
13:30 ..... Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)  
14:00 ..... Sana'a (RJ)

**Other Flights (Terminal 2)**

07:00 ..... Frankfurt, Rome (RJ)  
07:30 ..... Aqaba (RJ)  
08:30 ..... Damascus (RJ)  
09:00 ..... Jeddah (RJ)  
09:30 ..... Doha, Abu Dhabi (RJ)  
10:00 ..... Beirut (RJ)  
10:30 ..... Istanbul (RJ)  
11:00 ..... Athens (RJ)  
11:30 ..... Riyadh (RJ)  
12:00 ..... Aqaba (RJ)  
12:30 ..... Damascus (RJ)  
13:00 ..... New Delhi (RJ)  
13:30 ..... Singapore, Jakarta (RJ)  
14:00 ..... Bangkok (RJ)  
14:30 ..... Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)  
15:00 ..... Sana'a (RJ)

**MARKET PRICES**

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apples ..... 380/200  
Apricots ..... 440/340  
Bananas ..... 680 / 680  
Beans (Mukammal) ..... 620 / 620  
Beans ..... 520 / 350  
Carrots ..... 100 / 50  
Cauliflower ..... 180 / 100  
Cherry (red) ..... 280/220  
Cucumbers (large) ..... 100 / 50  
Cucumbers (small) ..... 170 / 50  
Eggplant ..... 700 / 300  
Garlic ..... 300/200  
Grapes ..... 380 / 480  
Lemon ..... 150 / 100  
Marrow (large) ..... 150 / 100  
Marrow (small) ..... 250 / 200  
Mint ..... 300/200  
Okra ..... 620/50  
Onion (dry) ..... 140 / 70  
Orange ..... 340/200  
Peaches ..... 600/300  
Peas ..... 300 / 220  
Pepper (hot) ..... 230 / 150  
Pepper (sweet) ..... 300 / 220  
Potato ..... 130 / 60  
Sweetcorn ..... 240/150  
Watermelon ..... 140/60







## Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1975

جوردان تايمز جديده عربية سياسية مستقلة تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية

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The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.  
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the Jordan Times advertising department.

## Fewer laws, freer views

THERE IS a political adage in western democracies that says that the least government is the best government. A corollary of this proposition is the view that deregulation to the optimum possible is the safest way to full democracy. We in Jordan should make every effort to learn from other democracies and emulate at least the positive features of their political processes. One of the main aims of this exercise is to enshrine, in law, pluralism and freedom of the press in our new national psyche.

On pluralism, we may have gone just a bit too far when 20 political parties, most of which are hardly distinguishable from one another, were licensed in the span of a few months. As for the freedom of thought, we seem to stumble every time we make another attempt to bolster our mass media as a cornerstone for our fledgling democracy.

The announcement Friday by the minister of information, Dr. Ma'an Abu Nowar, that he is proposing yet another regulatory regime for the work of Jordanian journalists comes as a fitting example of how our officialdom perceives the attainment of perfection for the press through laws and more laws. In suggesting that the profession requires a code of conduct over and above the proliferating laws and regulations on the same subject, he is raising the question of what the legal status of any such code would be. Will it have the effect of law? And, if so, how is it going to be implemented? If the intention is to the contrary, the question that remains is how will it be given effect and by whom. Given the fact that we already have laws on "press and publications" and a law on the "Press Association" that cover practically all the dimensions of the intended code, there appears to be little justification for elaborating on the same subject within the context of a code as such. Besides, we are not aware of one truly democratic country that has a similar code over and above any legislation it might have on the press. In terms of substance, there may be some other problems related to the proposal. In his submission in favour of the draft code, the minister of information drew heavily on the Constitution, on the laws on publications and of the Press Association and on the National Charter. While we do not differ with the proposition that these laws may serve as the basis for codifying new guidelines for journalists and newspapers in the country, we are not so sure that all these four pillars are necessarily compatible with one another. In all honesty, we believe that we have already enough guidelines on freedom of the press. The problem is not the absence of codes or regulations, but the lack of enlightened interpretation of this existing body of legislation.

As the American journalist Joseph Pulitzer once put it: "Our country and its press will rise or fall together. An able, disinterested, public spirited press with trained intelligence to know the right and courage to do it can preserve that public virtue without which popular government is a sham and mockery. A cynical, mercenary press will produce in time a people as base as itself. The power to mould the future will be in the hands of the journalists of future generations."

This is the only kind of code of conduct for the press that we may need. To achieve this noble objective, however, more pressing measures need to be introduced to elevate newspapers and the people who man them to a higher level of professionalism. This is where we need to concentrate our energies. Then the objectives of the proposed code of honour would have a better chance of fulfillment.

## ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

COMMENTING ON the invitation issued to the Arab parties to take part in the 11th round of the Middle East peace process, Al Ra'i daily said that nobody knows exactly when the talks will end and when the Israelis are going to succumb to the will of the world community and implement U.N. resolutions. The paper said that there is little chance that the 11th round, the 12th or others to follow will achieve any progress now that almost two years have passed and no progress has been achieved towards a settlement. Even the American-Arab talks and the American-Israeli talks, which are meant to bring the views closer together, are taking more time than the peace negotiations themselves, said the paper. Despite consultations, visits by U.S. officials and the lapse of 10 rounds of talks, no step has been made towards the implementation of U.N. resolutions on which these negotiations are based, the paper added. The lack of progress is mainly due to the fact that neither the U.S. administration nor the Israelis are willing to move forward and bring about a lasting settlement that would ensure the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied Arab lands, said the paper. It added that Arab parties are continually buying themselves with visits by U.S. officials, watching the Palestinians try to patch up differences regarding the peace negotiations or with other matters that can by no means contribute towards a settlement, instead of uniting their stands by word and deed and confront Washington.

THE INVITATION to the Arabs to take part in the 11th round of the Middle East talks coincides with a feverish escalation, on the part of Israel, of building settlements in the occupied Arab territories, said Al Ra'i Arabic daily Saturday. The paper said that Israel is intent on Judaizing the city of Jerusalem and the Arab lands of Palestine, to impose a de facto situation on the Arabs. There is nothing in Israel's acts and words that indicates the least intention of reaching a lasting peace with the Arab states and with the Palestinians, said the daily. By refusing to implement the U.N. resolutions, by rejecting the Arab demand of exchange of land for peace and by continuing to build settlements for Jewish immigrants, Israel is stalling the world community that it disregards its resolutions, said the paper. It is impossible for anyone, even the optimists, to see any light at the end of the dark tunnels in view of Israel's intransigent stand and its refusal to comply with U.N. resolutions, added the daily. The paper said that progress at the Arab-Israeli negotiations depends on the U.S. administration because it is the sponsor of the talks and it has pledged to achieve peace and security based on U.N. resolutions.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

By Dr. Fahed Al Fanek

## Foreign investment fails to take off

After 40 years and a chain of laws to encourage investments in the country, mainly through costly exemptions of taxes, Arab and foreign investments failed to gain momentum. The exemptions cost the treasury tens of millions of dinar with nothing in return. The law was not the major motivation behind any investment decision, as a potential investor may look into the taxation aspect, but his main worry is the financial feasibility of the project and whether or not it will make profits at all.

I have reason to believe that most projects which benefited from the law of encouraging investment and enjoyed the excessive exemptions from taxes on profits were to take place any way, even if there were no law to encourage investments and exempt them from paying income tax and other levies and fees for a long period.

My evidence to this assertion is that Arab capital contribution to capital formation in Jordan was between seven and nine per cent only. Foreign capital contributed no more than one per cent of the capital formation in the country. Most, if not all, of the Arab and foreign investments were in activities that did not benefit from the law and its generous exemptions.

If the above claim is valid, the tax exemptions should be reduced gradually until the present law of encouraging investments is abolished altogether without, of course, jeopardising the exemptions already granted to investors under the current law, the purpose being the maintenance of public confidence and the avoidance of surprises which may disturb the investment climate.

The mere fact that a country grants lavish exemptions to investors is counterproductive, because it suggests that either the regular taxes are excessive or the potential investments in certain sectors are not feasible and cannot

generate sufficient profits.

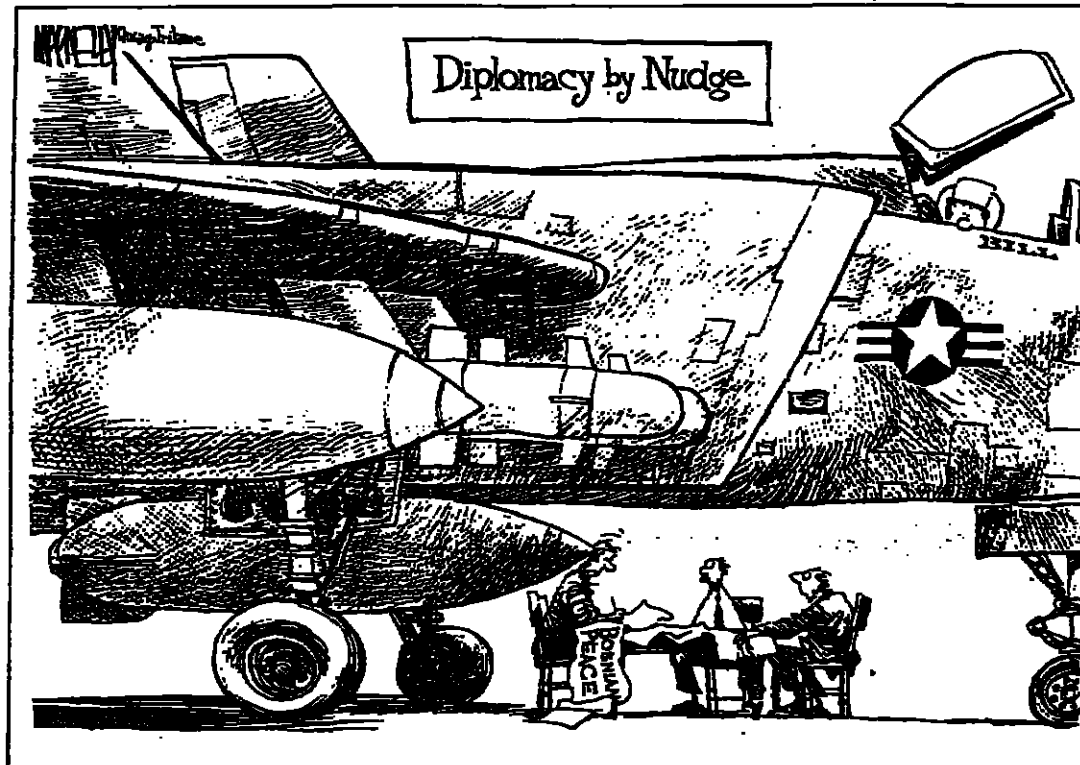
In the past, officials of the Ministry of Industry observed that the law encouraging investment was not effective and practically failed to attract any meaningful Arab or foreign investment, but their response was to amend the law, increase exemptions and extend their duration. It is high time to make the opposite and admit that the law is not, and could not, be effective and achieve its objectives and therefore should be abandoned as an approach to encourage investments. In this manner we shall cut down the losses of the treasury, and leave investments to be carried out on the bases of their economic merit rather than distorting investment decisions by introducing discriminating exemptions, granted on selective basis.

Going too far in granting tax exemptions to newly approved projects tends to push the treasury too far in overtaxing regular projects in order to make up for the unnecessary loss. The cancellation of all exemptions, not retroactively though, will allow the treasury to be gentler in the imposition of income taxes on companies. The tax burden will thus be spread over a wider base.

Under the current law you can find two identical factories of, say, furniture competing in the same market, with one required to pay 40 per cent of its profits as income tax, while the lucky other is not required to contribute a penny.

It is worth mentioning in this context that the present value of total Arab investments abroad was estimated at \$670 billion, of which only \$26 billion, or four per cent, were invested within the Arab World.

Jordan's share of Arab investments is less than one per cent of Arab investments within the Arab World, or 0.04 per cent of all Arab capital invested abroad. We have got nothing to lose.



## The world reels in the backwash of the cold war

By William Pfaff

PARIS — With the end of the cold war, the world passed from a Copernican to a post-Newtonian political universe. Before, the United States and the Soviet Union provided the fixed political points about which other nations revolved. Since their gravitational force has waned or been withdrawn, the international system's order has been lost, sending individual nations and parties tumbling into unforeseen and unpredictable orbits.

So long as the United States and the Soviet Union dominated the scene, other states and even their political party systems functioned within the fields of force radiating from Moscow and Washington. Now theirs is a situation of disorientation, erratic in its elements and frequently dangerous.

First to go was what had been the quasi-imperial system in Eastern Europe, latterly and disastrously extended to Afghanistan.

Next to go were the minor clients on both sides of the ideological line, who were simply, or not so simply, abandoned: Cubans, Sandinistas, the PLO, but also contras, UNITA fighters in Angola, the Mujahedeen in Afghanistan. They had served their purpose and now were on their own.

The result of that today is Cuba's economic ruin; the drift of abandoned soldiers on both sides of the Nicaraguan war into banditism; ideological justification stripped from what had always been an ugly power struggle in Angola; Mujahedeen sales of Stinger missiles on the international black market; radicalised Muslims in Beirut, Cairo, Rabat and Newark, New Jersey.

And now the western governments forged by the cold war are imploding.

The political force that ruled Japan from the signing of the Japanese-U.S. security treaty in 1951 until last week was the collaborative creation of conservative Japanese political figures and the American government.

It now has been replaced. When the Korean war broke out, Washington feared that the pacifist constitution that General Douglas MacArthur had imposed upon Japan might send the country towards a neutralist renunciation of international power, benefiting the Soviet Union and communist China. Japan's 1974 elections had favoured the Social Democratic Party, which also enjoyed the sympathy of the generally liberal-minded occupation authorities in the war's immediate aftermath, concerned about a revival of Japanese militarism.

ern allies; the Italians themselves auxiliaries of both. Postwar Italy submitted to what its NATO allies expected of it. The CIA intervened in the 1948 elections, establishing enduring alliances with party and labour groups. The Communist Party was, and remained, financed and controlled by Moscow. The Italians lived a form of internalised repression of their recognition of the external forces acting upon them, against which they felt themselves powerless. The immobilisation of political life during the cold war was thus not only endured but willed, if resentfully.

**"What happens now? It is logical to think that the major industrial states — all of them, except for Japan, still North American or West European — will be the suns and nearby stars as new orbits of power and ambition are eventually established. They will continue to control the material resources of power. It is entirely possible — indeed it has begun to happen — that violence will decide the process by which the new system emerges."**

By 1949, with the cold war in Europe at full blast, and China in the hands of the communists, the Social Democrats had lost their position, and by 1951 the government was firmly in conservative hands, where it has since remained. The conservative parties that later merged as the Liberal Democratic Party deliberately made themselves America's political client, and were seen to be such.

The postwar system is being destroyed in Italy — another implosion. After Mussolini's fall in 1943, Italy became a battleground for Germans and the west-

The explosion of terrorism in the 1970s was part of the cost Italy had to pay. So was the corruption of political society. What began in a pliant accommodation to political fortune ended not only in terror but in crime, the three eventually combining so that proclaimed revolutionaries collaborated in civil crime, and criminal organisations committed political crimes — of which the bombings in Florence, Milan and Rome in recent days are the latest desperate manifestation.

The European Community has been deeply disoriented by the

end of the cold war. Its immobility before the crisis in Yugoslavia is directly attributable to the fact that the United States failed to tell the Europeans what to do. Even now, more than a year after that crisis began, the West Europeans — who include the third, fourth and fifth most powerful industrial and military powers on earth — are still incapable of an effective common policy on the Bosnian endgame, or one to deal with the conflicts plainly threatened on Serbia's other borders, and in Kosovo, and those which may develop from ethnic and nationalist conflict elsewhere in Eastern Europe.

The collapse of the geopolitical structure is further complicated by the Clinton administration's considered decision to reduce America's world engagement. The Reagan and Bush administrations' effort to get other countries to finance American foreign and military policies in the Gulf and in Central America already had amounted to an abdication of America's leadership role.

What happens now? It is logical to think that the major industrial states — all of them, except for Japan, still North American or West European — will be the suns and nearby stars as new orbits of power and ambition are eventually established. They will continue to control the material resources of power. It is entirely possible — indeed it has begun to happen — that violence will decide the process by which the new system emerges.

But material power is not everything. The will to power counts, and the willingness to sacrifice. There is Islamic fundamentalist power today, Serbian power. There may come to be a reconstructed Russian power.

One should make no mistake about the difficulties to come. When international systems break down, a time of troubles follows. We have only entered ours — International Herald Tribune.

## Arms flow to Mideast tops \$50 billion in 3 years

By Charles J. Hanley  
The Associated Press

AFTER THE Gulf war, they "took the pledge." But the big powers, arms purveyors to the world, still can't seem to stop pouring high-priced weapons into the explosive Middle East.

In a widening stream that keeps assembly lines rolling from Omsk to Oklahoma, weapons exporters have shipped or agreed to ship more than \$50 billion in heavy armaments to the region in the three years since Iraq invaded Kuwait, new calculations show.

The U.N. Conventional Arms Register, whose 1992 listings will soon be made public, confirms that the United States and four other key producing nations delivered at least 85 warplanes and 521 tanks and other armoured vehicles to Mideast customers last year.

Pending deals far outweigh those. The expected \$28 billion to \$30 billion in U.S. foreign military sales for this fiscal year is the biggest annual total ever, and most is ticketed for Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Israel and other Mideast governments.

Two years ago, it looked like the regional weapons bazaar might be folding some of its tents. After the war with Iraq, whose military muscle grew on huge weapons purchases in the 1980s, then-President Bush told Congress: "It would be tragic if the nations of the Middle East and Gulf were now, in the wake of war, to embark on a new arms race."

Negotiations began among the five permanent U.N. Security Council members — the United States, Russia, China, Britain and France — to scale back military sales.

By late 1991, the five, the world's biggest weapons exporters, had pledged to avoid "destabilising" Mideast arms deals — a vague commitment to restraint in addition to the flat U.N. ban on weapons sales to Iraq.

But by late 1992 the talks had broken down. The flow of armour and air power did not.

In a new estimate, the Arms Control Association, a private Washington think tank, calculates U.S. military export agreements for the Mideast since August 1990 have totalled \$38.8 billion. As for other suppliers, congressional research service estimates indicate non-U.S. military sales in the Mideast approached \$20 billion for 1990-92.

Said the Arms Control Association's Lee Feinstein: "These numbers are a legacy of the Gulf war and the inability of the big suppliers in the past to come to grips with the problem of an unconstrained flow of arms to the region."

Some current deals: — Saudi Arabia is buying 72 U.S.-built F-15 warplanes, mostly advanced fighter-bomber models, for \$8.2 billion, and 48 British Tornado bombers for \$7.5 billion.

— The United Arab Emirates signed off on a \$3.5 billion deal for 390 Leclerc tanks from France.

— Iran ordered 500 of Russia's Workhorse T-72 tanks, reports the authoritative Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

— Russia also sold the Iranians two kilo-class patrol submarines, making Iran the first Gulf nation with undersea power.

The arms race is many-sided. Fear of Iran is cited for a Saudi buildup. Saudi purchases are used to justify Israeli arms deals. Syria scrambles to keep up with Israel, and so on.

Some in the region are worried.

"The Middle East is a powder keg, and to put more weapons into it will add to the horror," Kamel Abu Jaber, who has just stepped down as Jordan's foreign minister, told an interviewer.

For the supplier nations, the motive, increasingly, is pure economics.

Tanks exported from the Omsk arsenal, for example, bring in desperately needed hard currency for dollar-poor Russia. And McDonnell-Douglas Corp. said

the Saudi F-15 order would preserve 7,000 of its aerospace jobs in St. Louis and Tulsa, Okla.

The British and French show little enthusiasm for negotiating cutbacks in their Mideast arms sales, already stunted by tough American competition.

Even Britain's opposition Labour Party accepts the jobs-producing Mideast deals. "We'd like to see the five-power talks continue, but we also wish to see that the British armaments industry is able to compete on a level playing field," said Josh Arnold-Forster, a Labour defence analyst. In Washington, the Clinton administration is expected to issue a comprehensive arms control policy in the coming weeks.

Rep. Lee Hamilton, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said he would support any Clinton proposal for limits on Middle East sales.

"In every sale you come forward with a good reason for it: you need the business, the jobs. And the buyer can make a strong national security argument," Mr. Hamilton said. "But the cumulative impact is that the arms keep pouring out, and the next war, wherever, will be of higher lethality."

Clinton administration support for Mideast restraint seems uncertain, however.

In last year's presidential campaign, Mr. Clinton did endorse the idea of reining in arms sales via negotiations. But he also backed the big F-15 sale.

Said one knowledgeable State Department source, speaking on condition he not be named: "I wouldn't be surprised if the new policy skirts the whole Mideast issue."

## LETTERS

### The Israeli port where U.S. dollars sink

To the Editor:

As a member of the Council for the National Interest (CNI), you share, I know, my frustration and anger each time the Israeli government makes unreasonable demands on America. This is one of those times.

I am writing to give you some disturbing and little-known facts about the newest scheme devised by the Israeli government to extort even more money from U.S. taxpayers.

This scheme will possibly destroy thousands of American jobs, jeopardise the economic health of the U.S. shipbuilding industry, undermine U.S.-Arab relations and, worst of all, endanger the lives of U.S. servicemen and their families.

In fact, the price tag is so exorbitant that the package is being presented to Congress in increments to conceal the cost of the entire project. Here is exactly what is happening.

As a desperate move to pump up Israel's sagging socialist economy, the Rabin government devised a massive public works programme to pour countless millions of U.S. dollars into Israel each year (\$57 million the first year).

This shameful boondoggle calls for the expansion and improvement of the existing naval port at Haifa with the ultimate objective of "home-porting" the U.S. Sixth Fleet.

It would require enormous expenditures of U.S. money to pay for the construction of schools, housing, hospitals and other facilities for the use of U.S. military personnel and their families.

I don't have to tell you that home-porting at Haifa has nothing to do with what is best for America's interests in the Middle East. But it has everything to do with what is best for Israel.

Of course the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the Israeli government's official U.S. lobby, has sprung into action to sell this scheme to Congress. As part of AIPAC's public relations strategy to gain support for home-porting, the Israeli government plans to present the project as a magnanimous gesture of goodwill towards the United States.

According to the AIPAC script, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin will tell Americans how he is willing to have his country endure considerable inconvenience while the harbour is being upgraded. Mr. Rabin will claim that he is letting us build his new harbour to advance the national security interests of the United States.

But nothing could be further from the truth. As I mentioned earlier, from Israel's standpoint, home-porting at Haifa is nothing more than a transparent scheme designed to pump up the Israeli economy.

And that is not the worst of it. Israel also wants U.S. military forces to be highly visible on its shores. This is nothing less than a veiled ploy which could cause a deep rift in U.S.-Arab relations.

The Arab states would view home-porting at Haifa as further evidence of an intimate military alliance between the U.S. and dangerous to their security!

In any armed conflict in the Middle East, Israel would likely be a prime target. Our military personnel would be extremely vulnerable in the event of a war.

In fact, home-porting at Haifa is tantamount to signing the death certificates for our soldiers and their families assigned to the base should war break out.

I should also point out that high ranking U.S. naval officials admit the selection of Haifa does not respond to military realities and requirements. It's just a bad idea.

If you are as disturbed as I am about the consequences of home-porting at Haifa, I urge you to join with CNI to expose this travesty for what it really is — a drain on the U.S. taxpayer.

As you can see, the implications of this project are staggering potential danger to cost and lost American jobs but also in the point of my letter.

These are difficult times for Americans. We are watching our taxes go up while social security and other entitlements are threatened to be cut.

Adding insult to injury, we are also seeing massive U.S. military cutbacks. Even major U.S. naval bases in Charleston, S.C. and San Diego, California have been threatened.

When Americans are losing jobs because of military cutbacks, this is no time to let the Israeli government get away with another free ride on American taxpayers.

Paul Findley,  
Chairman CNI,  
Washington D. C.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unsolicited manuscripts.



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# Features

## How do people choose their mates?

By Malcolm Ritter  
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — After poring over statistics on Playboy playmates and scrutinizing the spouses of identical twins, psychologists are offering two new ideas about how people choose their mates.

As a first impression, one new study says, men are attracted by the lower half of a woman's hourglass figure.

And when it comes down to the final choice, the second study says, the selection process is surprisingly random.

The research is the latest in a longstanding effort to figure out how men and women choose each other for marriage.

Prior studies have found some general trends. People tend to marry others who are at similar to themselves in such areas as intelligence, political values, religion, age and ethnicity, for example.

If such findings seem to slacken the sweet mystery of it all, keep in mind that prominent mating researcher David Buss of the University of Michigan says no theory can predict just who a given individual will marry.

For men, anyway, one important first enticement may be women whose waists are small when compared to their hips. Devendra Singh of the University of Texas at Austin suggests in the August issue of the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.

That may not surprise many laymen, but Mr. Buss called the findings important because the idea had not been demonstrated before.

Mr. Singh said the attractiveness of a low ratio of waist to hip measurements probably began as a way for early humans to assess a woman's fitness to produce and rear children. Research has linked low ratios to good health and reproductive capability, he said.

And even in a culture whose icons of female beauty have ranged from the voluptuous to twiggies, the attractiveness of a low waist-to-hip ratio has endured, Mr. Singh says.

He found that although women in Playboy centerfolds and Miss America winners have become thinner through the decades, their waist-to-hip ratios have barely budged. And his surveys of men and women show that lower waist-to-hip ratios in women are more attractive than higher ones.

In the other mating study, in the July issue of the same journal, David Lykken and Auke Tellegen of the University of Minnesota propose that although mate-seeking people choose from a field broadly similar to themselves, the final choice is surprisingly random.

That might surprise people who can think of good reasons they chose their mates. But Mr. Lykken sees that as rationalizing. "One thing about human nature is that you can't tolerate a feeling that doesn't seem to have any legitimate cause," he said.

"You invent a cause for it. If the feeling is one of desperate infatuation with Sue, then the reasons why any right-minded young man should be desperately infatuated with Sue flood to the mind. I think the infatuation comes first, and the reasons come later."

Mr. Lykken and Mr. Tellegen surveyed middle-aged identical twins and their spouses, and they proposed the randomness idea after finding no evidence that people use any set of criteria to

choose a mate.

If they did, the researchers reasoned, identical twins who grew up together, having identical genes and very similar childhoods, should share nearly the same criteria and so choose highly similar spouses.

But they found that spouses of twin pairs in their study were not especially alike. They also found that twins did not consistently approve of their sibling's choice of mate, contrary to what one might expect if the two twins were using similar selection criteria.

The spouses also failed to report any consistent attraction toward their spouse's identical twin.

Mr. Buss, however, said he believes the twin work fails to provide very strong evidence for the conclusion that so much of mating is random. It overlooks some research on influences over mate choice and does not test adequately theories about how people pair off, he said. He also said it has some methodological shortcomings.

Mr. Lykken defended the work, but said other scientists should try their own experiments to see if they support or refute the conclusion.

Mr. Lykken said his own rule is, "you should never believe a new result, especially if it's interesting, until it has been repeated — preferably from somebody who doesn't believe it."

### How the researchers arrived at their findings:

Devendra Singh of the University of Texas at Austin examined body measurements for women in Playboy centerfolds for 1955 to 1965 and 1976 to 1990 — the vital statistics were not published during the intervening years — and found that even though the women became more slender, their waist-to-hip ratio changed only slightly, from .68 to .71.

Similarly, although Miss America winners also became more slender from 1923 to 1987, their waist-to-hip ratio was little changed, dipping from .72 to .69, he found.

He also asked 116 white men, ages 18 to 22, to study line drawings of 12 women who were either overweight, underweight or of normal weight and who had waist-to-hip ratios of .7, .8, .9 or 1. In all three weight categories, figures with lower ratios were rated as more attractive than those with higher ones.

Similar results appeared in a study with 89 older white men, ages 25 to 85, another study with white women from ages 18 to 78, and still another with young blacks of both genders, Mr. Singh said. All those studies involved Americans, and if a low ratio is truly a basic human enticement it should also appear alluring in future studies with other cultures, he said.

David Lykken and Auke Tellegen of the University of Minnesota found that when the spouses of 152 pairs of identical twins were compared on 74 mostly psychological traits, they were not much more alike than random pairs of same-sex participants in the study.

In another survey, 288 identical twins were asked what they had initially thought of their sibling's choice of mate. Although 39 per cent of identical twins said they could have fallen for their sibling's spouse or that they "really liked" him or her, 38 per cent said they would not have chosen that spouse or would have rather stayed single than marry that person.

## Sex, lies, drugs and shame — the unraveling of a major gang prosecution

By Sharon Cohen  
The Associated Press

CHICAGO — Two former henchmen in the city's most notorious gang are seen snorting heroin. Both are prison inmates at the time — and government witnesses.

Another ex-gang leader testifies he had sex with his wife about five times while in federal custody — and in government offices.

These startling disclosures of sex and drugs involving the El Rukns street gang have turned one of the most successful criminal prosecutions ever in Chicago into one of the biggest embarrassments — and biggest potential scandals — for the federal government.

A six-year probe of the drug-dealing gang that led to 53 convictions or guilty pleas is unraveling. Two federal judges in June ordered new trials for six El Rukns or associates, saying the U.S. attorney's office and others concealed evidence that gang members took drugs, had sex and were given special favors while government witnesses. A third judge is hearing similar charges and more convictions are likely to be challenged.

"They were on a mission to clean up the El Rukns. Anything justified the ends," defense lawyer Richard Kling said of the government. "It was 'we're the good guys, they're the bad guys, we can do whatever we need to do in order to get them.'"

"They also argued they put them behind bars and stopped their criminality. But they didn't, did they?" asked Peter Schmiedel, another lawyer whose client won retrial. "It's one thing to admit to a life of crime on the street, it's another thing to admit crimes... while in custody and the government allowing it to occur."

Mr. Schmiedel argues the accused were denied a fair trial because defense attorneys didn't know — and couldn't tell jurors — about witnesses' illicit behavior.

"This evidence... not only tainted witnesses, it tainted the whole government strategy, it tainted the whole case," Mr. Schmiedel said.

The U.S. attorney's office has not said whether it will appeal or seek new trials. But in court papers filed in late July, prosecutors said claims that gang members were having sex and taking drugs are "terminally inconsistent and inherently implausible."

The charges, however, are being investigated by the Justice Department's office of professional responsibility. The case is now being handled by John Smietanka, U.S. attorney in western Michigan.

Both judges said in written rulings that they didn't believe William Hogan, the top El Rukn prosecutor, was unaware of drug use by his witnesses.

But Mr. Hogan's attorney, Shelly Kulwin, insists his client did nothing wrong and contends the government has failed to introduce evidence that would vindicate him.

"He worked 18-hour days for years, doing the right thing," Ms. Kulwin said. "Could he cover every little thing that happened? Was he there every minute of the day?... No. Was there a possibility on one occasion that an agent screwed up, a secretary screwed up, something occurred? Yes. Did it involve drugs or sex? No."

The El Rukn convictions were touted as the final chapter in the 25-year history of a nefarious gang that amassed a multimillion dollar empire of murder, muscle and drugs.

Using racketeering laws and gang members turned informants, prosecutors decimated the organization, only to face troubling questions about their methods.

Among the findings of U.S. district judges James Holderman and Suzanne Conlon, both of whom are ex-federal prosecutors: — Two key El Rukns, Henry Leon Harris and Harry Evans, used drugs while imprisoned as government witnesses. Both tested positive for morphine in 1989 and were not given additional analysis tests.

— El Rukn witnesses had contact visits with girlfriends, wives and others. Some testified in post-trial hearings they had sex in government offices while guarded by agents of the alcohol, tobacco and firearms office or Chicago police.

— El Rukn cooperating witnesses had free access to the U.S. attorney's office's phones and free call forwarding services while incarcerated.

— The government provided gang witnesses clothing, gifts, a camera and headset radios, some at government expense. One El Rukn witness told the FBI that agents guarding him occasionally left him beer in government offices.

— A paralegal for the prosecutors had sexually explicit conversations with an El Rukn witness and smuggled in laxatives that may have been used after informants allegedly swallowed drug-filled condoms or balloons.

## Science fantasy

By Maxine F. Singer

SUDDENLY THIS summer, the arcane subject of molecular genetics is high fashion. Steven Spielberg and *Jurassic Park* succeeded at what generations of scientists failed to do: get people excited about biology. Lots of children, and even their science-averse parents, are talking about the two D's: DNA and dinosaurs. And everyone is asking: Can it be done? Can you really make a triceratops or a tyrannosaur or a velociraptor if you try? The answer is no. Not now. Maybe never.

*Jurassic Park's* "experiment" has three parts. None of them is now feasible. The first problem is to acquire dinosaur DNA, of many different species, and determine, for each, the order of its billions of DNA building blocks — that is, the dinosaurs' genomes. Each block is one of four kinds of molecules we can call A, G, T and C. It is the order of A, G, T and C in the DNA provided to a fertilized egg by its parents that encodes genes and other information needed to grow a human being.

It's safe to assume that 200 million years ago, in the Jurassic period, dinosaur eggs were similarly instructed. But no one knows the order of more than a tiny proportion of the A, G, T and C in any living organism.

*Jurassic Park's* scientists get their DNA from dinosaur blood. The blood itself is presumed to exist in a Jurassic mosquito, which, sated by its blood meal, rested on a tree trunk where it was trapped in sap. The sap then hardened into amber over the millennia.

In fact, small fragments of insect DNA have been recovered from amber. With some good guess-work, the order of A, G, T and C in a 300-block-long stretch has been determined. But there is no reason to believe that the fragments representing the entire insect genome, much less a dinosaur's genome, can be recovered.

Nor is there reason to believe that the order of the billions of blocks could be reconstructed from the small fragments of DNA that persist even under the ideal preservation conditions in amber.

Out in the open, water and oxygen would have destroyed the DNA long ago. In a clever device to make the whole "experiment" seem real, *Jurassic Park* acknowledges that the dinosaur DNA

will be incomplete. The gaps in the DNA were filled by guess-work as to what they should be or by using DNA from a contemporary living amphibian, like a frog. And this, of course, is the fatal flaw, *Jurassic Park's* dinosaurs are designed to be female to avoid natural breeding. But amphibians can change sex, and the amphibian DNA segments gave the dinosaurs that ability.

The second impossible task is to go from the entire genome, all the DNA, to a living animal. In *Jurassic Park*, the DNA of an unfertilized egg is removed, the reconstructed "dinosaur" DNA is placed in the egg, and after a suitable period under conditions imagined to be hospitable, a cute baby dinosaur emerges.

This too makes a great story, but don't be fooled. Biologists have no idea how to accomplish such feats.

And it is unlikely that such an experiment would succeed. For one thing subtle and poorly understood changes in adult DNA (like that from blood) compared to DNA in eggs and sperm probably make adult DNA incapable of properly initiating the complicated developmental process. For another, in those spe-

cies we know about, like flies, the eggs contain molecules other than DNA, manufactured by the mother's cells. Without these maternal components, the egg can't develop properly, if at all.

The third problem occurs to the story's visiting paleontologists immediately after their spectacular arrival at the park. All living things, humans included, interact with their natural environment.

Maybe sometime in the future we'll learn how to revive extinct animals. And maybe we'll be rich enough to try such fanciful experiments. For now, though, academic scientists and those working in biotechnology are interested in spending what resources are available on using genetics to ameliorate human disease, to understand evolution and to modify plants and animals so we can better feed a hungry world.

The writer, a molecular biologist, is president of the Carnegie Institution of Washington and scientist emeritus at the National Institutes of Health. This article is reprinted from the *Washington Post*.

## Taiwan unveils U.N. bid plan

TAIPEI — Getting the United Nations to set up an ad hoc committee to look into the ROC's bid to reenter the international organization is Taiwan's first step towards full U.N. membership, Foreign Minister Fredrick Chien said on Aug. 9, 1993.

It was the first time the ministry disclosed ROC's U.N. bid since the issue became the focus of the country's foreign policy last year.

The ROC has adopted this approach because it was more "open-minded" than other approaches such as a direct application for membership or for observer status at the U.N., Chien said.

Another reason for the approach was the new attitude prevailing in the ROC

which has seen the nation stop viewing Peking as a rebellious group by ending the period of national mobilization for the suppression of the Communist Rebellion in 1991.

Chien addressed his speech after seven Central American countries co-signed a letter to U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali. The letter asked the U.N. General Assembly to include an item, titled "Review of the exceptional situation of the ROC on Taiwan in the international context with the established pattern of parallel representation by divided countries in the United Nations," in the agenda of the assembly's session in September. They also requested that a U.N. ad hoc committee be set up to

study and analyse the ROC's situation before presenting its recommendations to be discussed at the assembly's regular session next year.

According to an enclosed explanatory memorandum to the letter, the countries also argued that the formula of adopting a resolution in 1971 regarding the representation of China as "obviously overly simplistic."


The resolution also produced adverse consequences for the ROC on Taiwan, the memorandum said.

U.N. Resolution 2758 in 1971 had determined that China's seat would be occupied by PRC, and that the PRC was the only representative of China.

However, despite being replaced by PRC, the ROC continued existing as an independent political entity and was not annexed by the PRC, the letter said.

According to a local newspaper, several African countries would follow the path set by Central American countries and speak up for the ROC at the U.N. General Assembly this year.

Chien reminded the public that the proposal was only the beginning of a long and difficult struggle. The ministry did not expect the proposal to be passed this year due to opposition from the PRC, he said. "However, foreseeing failure on the first try does not stop us from taking the first step," Chien said.



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# Clinton promises all-out fight for NAFTA

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton is pledging an all-out campaign on behalf of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) now he has found common ground with Mexico and Canada over worker rights and the environment.

On Friday, the trade ministers from the United States, Mexico and Canada sealed crucial side deals to the NAFTA, claiming a path-breaking commitment to link free trade with labour rights and environmental sensitivity.

Analysts said it was the first time the two issues have been so thoroughly addressed in a trade accord. But thorough or not Mr. Clinton faces an uphill battle winning over Congress in a fight the president can ill afford to lose.

"NAFTA is strongly in the interests of the United States," Mr. Clinton said. "Today I pledge my strongest commitment to a major effort this fall to secure NAFTA's passage."

Born under administration of then president George Bush and gingerly endorsed by candidate Clinton, the NAFTA would link some 360 million consumers in the world's biggest free-trade zone.

The new side deals — which were months in the making — stiffen the NAFTA by opening the way to punishments if member nations fail to enforce labour and environmental standards.

But before trade barriers come tumbling down, the deal must be approved by a majority of both

houses of Congress — by no means a given with early reaction decidedly mixed.

"Putting side agreements on NAFTA is like putting earrings on a hog. It's a bad trade agreement and side agreements will dress it up a little, but won't change it," said Democratic Senator Byron Dorgan.

In a major blow to the administration, House of Representatives majority leader Richard Gephardt — whose voice can swing other Democrats firmly into line — said he could not support the agreement as it stands.

"I am not optimistic that these deficiencies can be successfully resolved," Mr. Gephardt said. Unions too said they had been

sold out, with their objections outpacing the complaints of environmentalists, who appeared at first draft to have won stronger protections.

Hoping to appease labour critics — who fear business will be lured by cheap labour south of the border — Mexico said its minimum wage would rise as economic productivity picks up.

"We'll be assuring an effective and permanent improvement in minimum wages, now and in the future," Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari said in Mexico City.

Under the side deals, Mexico and the United States could face sanctions for persistent wrongdoing, but Canada would just face punishment by its own courts.

Canadian business, which had feared U.S. industry would use sanctions to wield protectionist threats, applauded the deal.

"It has not been easy but we have prevailed," Trade Minister Thomas Hockin said in Ottawa. "Under these agreements, Canada will never be subject to trade sanctions."

Mexico's Trade Minister Jaime Serra Puche — whose government has staked its future on economic reform — insisted in Mexico City that his nation was the real winner.

"The result is very favourable for Mexico, because it will allow us to improve the living standard of our workers... and enjoy a better environment in the future," said Mr. Serra Puche.

## China unveils sweeping property restrictions

PEKING (R) — China announced strict measures Friday to halt chaotic and damaging property speculation, including an outright ban on popular but frivolous projects like gold courses and horse-racing tracks.

The official Xinhua news agency said the State Council, China's cabinet, decreed seven administrative measures as part of economic reform to bring property speculation to heel.

Mr. Zhu, a powerful vice premier who doubles as central bank governor, has named property and securities speculation as key targets in his efforts to cool China's overheating economy, recently expanding at a rate of about 14 per cent a year, and snuff out urban inflation running at more than 20 per cent.

Property development has become a national — and highly profitable — obsession in China, soaking up billions of dollars in questionable state loans which officials now say should have gone to industry, housing and agriculture.

Mr. Zhu said last month that all such "improper" loans must be returned by Aug. 15 and vowed to punish severely bankers and local officials who failed to comply with his decree.

Xinhua issued a frosty reminder that China was still a socialist state, despite a giddy decade of capitalist experiments, saying flatly: "In China, all land is owned by the government."

The new measures bar banks and land administration units from running property companies and impose strict limits on the

amount of land that can be leased for property development, Xinhua said.

"Localities should strictly control the amount of land used for real estate purposes and ensure that the use of land conforms with the requirements of city planning, a development schedule, basic facilities and legal procedures," it said.

The decrees said property investment must have the primary goal of promoting key industry and infrastructure projects and the construction of housing for urban Chinese. They placed sharp curbs on just about everything else.

"For buildings with limited market potential, such as villas, holiday villages, luxury apartments, hotels and office buildings, the country will place strict limits on this area and halt the construction of some buildings already in progress," Xinhua said.

Frivolous luxury projects were banned altogether. "There will be no approval of, no license, no land and no loan for such expensive projects as horse race tracks and golf courses," the State Council said. "The government will sternly punish those who engage in speculative activities with the aim of making quick money rather than a long-term investment."

Local governments must convert "improper" property projects into workshops, standard apartments and buildings for commercial and service purposes, it said. Projects that cannot be converted "should be halted resolutely."

## U.S. says oil tax will not harm Arab Gulf exports

DUBAI (R) — President Bill Clinton's energy tax, passed by the Senate earlier this month, is unlikely to affect U.S. oil imports from Gulf states, U.S. Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary was reported as saying Saturday.

Ms. O'Leary told the United Arab Emirates newspaper Al Itihad the 4.3 cents-per-gallon tax hike, sharply criticised by Gulf oil producers, would benefit both consumers and producers by encouraging conservation of natural fuel resources.

Ms. O'Leary said it was "unlikely the tax... would affect the size of U.S. imports of Gulf crude oil or petroleum products," the newspaper reported.

She said the United States, which last year imported around 1.8 million barrels of oil per day from the Gulf, had been in touch with oil ministers in the region, and would hold discussions with the ministers over the next two months.

Gulf Arab oil producers have criticised the U.S. tax and proposals for a tougher European energy tax as unfair.

They say although the taxes are described as environmental measures, they will cut demand for Gulf oil exports in favour of greater pollutant fuels such as coal.

## Yen's upsurge upsets tourists in Japan

TOKYO (AP) — Japanese exporters and government officials aren't the only ones bemoaning the seemingly endless rise in the yen's value. Now tourists are complaining that the land of the rising sun has gone from expensive to unaffordable.

"Everything is so expensive here," lamented Patricia Marsden, a tourist from Toronto, after visiting several of Tokyo's department stores Friday.

One U.S. dollar now buys about 102 yen, almost 20 per cent less than in early February, when the yen's latest surge to historic highs began. That makes Japan almost 20 per cent more expensive for an American tourist.

But visitors from other countries are not immune. Given the recent confusion in European currency markets, more investors are buying yen, pushing up its value against most currencies.

One of those feeling the pain was Don Charlesworth, a New Zealander visiting Japan for the first time. He was floored by the cost of a set of golf clubs he priced in the plush Ginza shopping district.

The same 11-iron club set from Ping Zing of the United States that goes for about \$1,000 back home was fetching 324,000 yen, the equivalent of \$3,200, he said.

"People in Japan may be able to afford it, but it's too expensive for me," Mr. Charlesworth said.

To make matters worse, the value of the New Zealand dollar has gone down every day of his trip. The same currency that got

him 58.50 yen last Saturday when he arrived in Japan was getting him just 56 yen Friday.

For years, Japan has been an expensive place to visit, with an inefficient distribution system making consumer prices among the highest in the world. But the higher yen makes it even worse for travellers.

The number of travellers to Japan grew by just one per cent last year after rising 14 per cent and nine per cent respectively in the two years before that, according to the ministry of transport.

Businesses that cater to tourists are also getting antsy. Haruyuki Tajiri, reception manager at the moderate Ginza Tokyo Hotel, said he was worried that the higher yen would send budget-minded customers to cheaper hotels. The standard room at his hotel goes for 25,000 yen (about \$250).

Junko Igarashi, spokeswoman of the Japan Travel Bureau, Japan's largest travel agency, said the higher yen is likely to encourage travellers to Asia to skip Japan in favour of cheaper destinations like Hong Kong and Bangkok.

But if the yen is keeping foreign tourists away from Japan, it's having the opposite effect on Japanese going abroad. For them, everything abroad seems cheap.

Last year, a record 11.8 million Japanese travelled abroad and spent a record \$35.4 billion, according to a report compiled by the prime minister's office.

## Pakistan premier to announce economic reform within days

ISLAMABAD (R) — Pakistan's government will announce an economic reform package soon to put the country back on the rails of development, caretaker Prime Minister Moeen Qureshi said Saturday.

"My government has prepared a detailed economic programme which fulfills present day requirements," Mr. Qureshi, a former vice-president of the World Bank, said in a speech marking Pakistan's independence day.

Promising to unveil the reforms within days, Mr. Qureshi said political instability and 11 years of war in neighbouring Afghanistan had damaged Pakistan's economy. The war forced Pakistan to shoulder the burden of 3.5 million Afghan refugees and cope with an influx of illegal arms and

drugs, he said.

Soon after taking office, Mr. Qureshi devalued the Pakistani rupee by 6.02 per cent to boost flagging exports — a move severely criticised by most political parties.

Economic analysts believe Mr. Qureshi will announce major economic changes, including a tax on agricultural income. No previous government has been able to impose such a levy because of the vested interests of powerful feudal landlords in parliament and the provincial assemblies.

The Nation, an independent English-language daily, said on Friday Mr. Qureshi would cut import duties across the board, impose new taxes in the energy

sector and end various subsidies. It said the programme was finalised by Mr. Qureshi during a recent visit to Washington, where he saw senior officials at the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Pakistan is currently negotiating with the IMF on details and conditions of a soft loan aid package worth about \$1 billion. The loan was offered on the basis of continued structural reforms and tighter fiscal controls.

The World Bank agreed earlier this year to lend Pakistan \$250 million in balance of payments support.

Mr. Qureshi said his government was ready to take tough decisions to help the economy, but would spend maximum resources on human development.

## India probe report says foreign banks should go

NEW DELHI (R) — An Indian parliamentary committee investigating India's \$1.28 billion securities scandal proposed in a draft report Friday that four foreign banks allegedly involved in the affair should be asked to leave.

The joint parliamentary committee (JPC) accused the banks of involvement in India's worst stocks and securities scandal that broke last year, bringing opposition calls for Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's resignation.

Mr. Rao last month narrowly survived a no-confidence motion over the scandal, in which brokers and bankers colluded to illegally divert funds from trading in government securities to fuel a boom on the Bombay Stock Exchange.

The banks allegedly involved in the scandal are Britain's Standard Chartered PLC, ANZ Group Ltd's ANZ Grindlays Bank,

Bankamerica Corp's Bank of America N.T. S.A. and Citicorp's Citibank N.A.

JPC members said earlier they had closely examined the securities transactions of the four foreign banks.

The JPC draft report said: "The seriousness of the transgressions by the foreign banks is apparent from an observation of the representative of the finance ministry who when asked if the government was ready to tell the foreign banks to pack up, replied in a resounding 'yes, sir'."

"The committee hopes the government would take necessary action in this regard," the report, seen by Reuters, said.

The 30-member JPC, which is due to submit its final report to parliament this month, has a majority of Mr. Rao's Congress Party deputies who may eventually tone down the proposed action against the foreign banks, opposi-

tion members say. Finance Minister Manmohan Singh, piloting India's sweeping economic reforms, has warned against any move to close down foreign banks, saying it would harm his efforts to raise foreign loans. Mr. Singh says the scandal was a "systems failure."

Some of the accused banks have claimed they were following normal practice in the volatile securities market when the scandal erupted in April last year.

The JPC is currently debating whether to summon Mr. Rao, accused by Bombay's "big bull" stockbroker Harshad Mehta, the main accused in the scandal, of accepting 10 million rupees (\$320,000) in payoffs, its members said.

Mr. Mehta says his payment to Mr. Rao in November 1991 had helped him carry out some irregular transactions at the stock exchange because government officials looked the other way.

## Reforms in Tanzania may fuel capital flight — experts

DAR ES SALAAM (R) — Tanzanian economists warned Friday that recent financial reforms, including foreign exchange auctions and the harmonising of exchange rates, could speed capital flight and would not stabilise the local currency.

"The auctions are experimental and rather than eliminating the foreign exchange parallel market they might provide avenues for capital flight," said Alfred Mbeli, head economist at Dar Es Salaam's University.

Weekly foreign exchange auctions by former socialist Tanzania's central bank were launched last month and have driven to local shilling up from around 500 to the U.S. dollar to around 460. This has reversed a trend of devaluation that relentlessly pushed the shilling down in value since independence in 1961, when the currency was worth six to the dollar.

The market has been fed by the occasional sale of foreign exchange raised by the central bank through sales of gold on the London market.

The central bank has bought the gold from small miners at high cash prices that are competitive with those offered by smugglers.

But Mr. Mbeli said the shilling could not be stabilised simply through foreign exchange management, adding that the confidence of local businessmen in the future of the economy would have to improve if they were not going to use it to send money abroad.

He added that Tanzania's economy, impoverished after years of socialist policies, was not yet strong enough to absorb the massive dollar injections from the central bank.

Mr. Mbeli cited the cases of Uganda and Zambia, where dollar auctions worked for a while

but closed down after the central bank ran short of foreign exchange.

A crucial aspect of currency liberalisation is support from foreign donors who can underwrite the process of change — which economists believe must sustain an initial period in which capital flight is rampant, but later calms down.

In what could be an example of this support, the European Community (EC) will donate \$50.5 million to Tanzania for balance of payments support, finance ministry officials said Friday.

The money, given under the latest EC Lome aid agreement with Third World countries, will be stored in a fund which importers will draw from, compensating the government with counter-part funds in shillings.

The local currency raised will then be used for health and education costs, the officials said.

### Peanuts



### Andy Capp



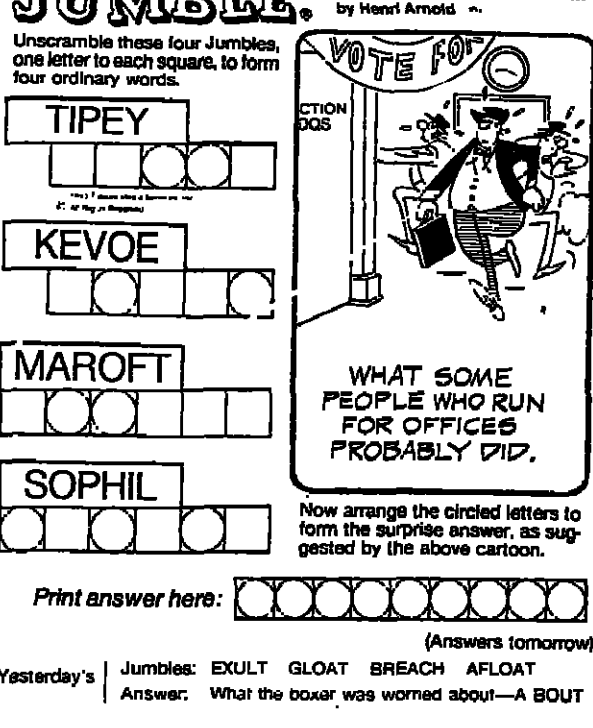
### Mutt'n'Jeff



### THE BETTER HALF. By Harris

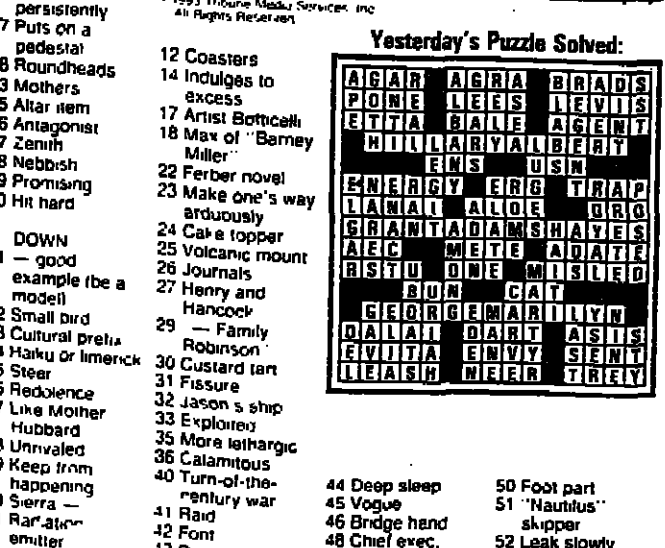
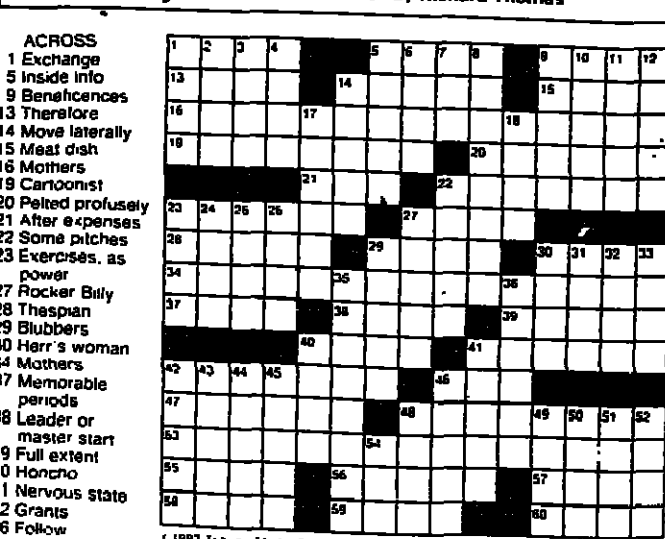


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### THE Daily Crossword by Richard Thomas





## Bank of China plans overseas expansion

HONG KONG (AFP) — The Bank of China is setting up more branches abroad, notably in Russia and Thailand in the near future, as part of an effort to build a global network by 1997, the Xinhua news agency has said.

In the past two years the bank has opened branches in Canada, Kazakhstan, South Korea and Italy and is now represented in 18 countries, with capital running as high as \$113 billion, the official agency said in a dispatch monitored here.

Plans are also in the works to upgrade branches in Vietnam, Brazil, Panama and the Netherlands.

## Taiwan eases credit curbs to spur economy

TAIPEI (R) — Taiwan's central bank eased restrictions on lending to property buyers and investment firms Saturday as part of measures to stimulate flagging economic growth.

Financial institutions will be allowed to make more loans for purchases of vacant land in urban areas, as long as the deals are made for legitimate purposes such as construction of commercial and residential buildings, the central bank said.

Ceilings on lending to investment companies that have not registered with the finance ministry were scrapped. Some credit curbs, such as limits on lending for golf course development, were retained.

## UAE says it is on verge of new oil era

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is embarking on a new phase of expansion in its oil industry following the discovery of new deposits and the development of new energy facilities, according to an official report.

Despite fears that proposed Western energy taxes would lower demand for oil, the UAE has pressed ahead with expansion plans and stepped up exploration, said the report by the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC), which controls the UAE's oil industry.

"New discoveries have been made in onshore and offshore areas, new fields have been commissioned and existing fields are being developed and upgraded, while new gas plants have been set up and existing units and refineries are being expanded," the report in the August issue of the company's magazine ADNOC News said.

The new projects would "put the UAE by the start of next year before a new phase in its oil industry and its role in the world oil market," the report added.

The UAE, a key member of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), has around 98 billion barrels of crude oil reserves — nearly 10 per cent of the world's reserves — and 5.6 trillion cubic metres (186.6 trillion cubic feet) of gas reserves.

Oil industry sources said the projects, costing more than \$5 billion would push the UAE's crude output capacity to around three million barrels per day (b/d) by 1995 compared with 3.5 million b/d currently.

Gas output is set to double to nearly five million tonnes annually.

ADNOC said a project to increase the production capacity of Umm Al Nar refinery to 85,000 b/d from 72,000 b/d would be completed this month, while studies are underway to expand the other refinery at Ruwais.

The company said another project to develop a gas field in Hadshan was launched in March while the commissioning of a new oil field in Jura Yafour would begin in December.

Almost all the expansion is being carried out in Abu Dhabi, the biggest UAE emirate, which produces more than 80 per cent of the country's output. Abu Dhabi also owns around 90 per cent of the crude reserves.

The second largest producer is Dubai, but according to the Nicosia-based Middle East Economy Survey, the emirate's production has steadily fallen over the past two years because of a decline in offshore fields. From a peak of 410,000 b/d in 1991, Dubai produced about 310,000 b/d in July, it said.

Around half of the UAE's oil production of 2.16 million b/d is exported to Japan, which also receives most of the UAE's gas output.

The UAE has reached its highest level of oil production since it began crude exports in 1962, unlike neighbouring Saudi Arabia, whose output has declined to eight million b/d, from nearly 12 million b/d during the boom of the late 1970s.

Other Gulf states have also embarked on energy expansion programmes in expectation of increased demand.

However, some experts have said such plans will have to be revised if the European Community and the United States go ahead with proposed energy taxes, which are likely to reduce demand and lower the oil revenue of Gulf countries.

Oil industry sources in the region said the current projects fell within short-term plans up to 1995.

"Long term plans will depend on the future outlook of the oil market and the effects of the energy taxes if they are enforced," one expert said.

## New growth data pushes Australia to top of Western league

SYDNEY (AFP) — New data showing a dramatic pick-up in economic growth has pushed Australia to the top of the growth league of Western economies, although some economists urged caution before celebrations begin.

According to national accounts figures released by the Bureau of Statistics, real gross domestic product (GDP) jumped by 1.2 per cent in seasonally adjusted terms for the quarter, from the preceding three months, representing a rise for the year of 3.3 per cent.

Boosted more by consumer

and government spending than by much needed business investment, the rate of growth in the three months to June was almost double what most analysts had forecast.

The annual growth rate to the end of the March quarter was 2.5 per cent which meant the June increase was the sharpest since the economic boom was tailing off in the September quarter of 1989.

However, the bureau's trend measure, which smooths out seasonal influences, gave a less optimistic reading, recording growth of only 0.6 per cent in the quarter

and representing an annual 2.8 per cent.

Prime Minister Paul Keating said the figure pushed Australia in the top of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) table and would give added momentum to an economy which had returned to its favourable position of 30 years ago.

"As the growth picks up employment will start," he said.

Dresner Bank economist Rob Henderson said the data showed the recovery remained reasonably robust.

"We have the highest growth

rate of the OECD nations," he said. "These sort of numbers show we are doing extremely well."

However some others, including Treasurer John Dawkins said that while encouraging the data may have overstated the strength of the economy.

"I think you've got to take some qualification about these figures in terms of suggesting that we are growing at 3.3 per cent on an annualised basis," Mr. Dawkins told a press conference. "If you look at the trend figures... I think we've got an economy

which is still in need of some stimulus."

The latest figure follows a growth rate of 0.4 per cent in the March quarter, which had been revised from the previously published figure of 0.5 per cent.

The bureau said the national accounts were released early because of the Aug. 17 budget and the latest figures could also be revised.

The GDP figure of 1.2 per cent is an average of three other measures — one for income, one for expenditure and one for production.

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CURRENCY	BID	OFFER
U.S. Dollar	0.4450	0.4470
Sterling Pound	0.4450	0.4470
Deutsche Mark	0.4450	0.4470
Swiss Franc	0.4450	0.4470
French Franc	0.4450	0.4470
Japanese Yen	0.4450	0.4470
Dutch Guilder	0.4450	0.4470
Swedish Krona	0.4450	0.4470
Italian Lira	0.4450	0.4470
Belgian Franc	0.4450	0.4470

Other Currencies

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.5250	1.5450
Lebanese Lira	0.039155	0.040505
Saudi Riyal	0.1648	0.1660
Kuwaiti Dinar	0.2550	0.2580
Qatari Riyal	0.1685	0.1710
Egyptian Pound	0.0000	0.0000
Omani Riyal	1.7700	1.8000
U.A.E. Dirham	0.1685	0.1710
Greek Drachma	0.0000	0.0000
Cypriot Pound	1.3135	1.3655

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTH	6 MTH	12 MTH
U.S. Dollar	5.45	5.45	5.45	5.45
Sterling Pound	5.45	5.45	5.45	5.45
Deutsche Mark	5.45	5.45	5.45	5.45
Swiss Franc	5.45	5.45	5.45	5.45
French Franc	5.45	5.45	5.45	5.45
Japanese Yen	5.45	5.45	5.45	5.45

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**Financial Markets**

Jordan Times in co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin Date: 12.8.1993

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U.S. Dollar	0.4450	0.4470
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French Franc	0.4450	0.4470
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Omani Riyal	1.7700	1.8000
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Japanese Yen	5.45	5.45	5.45	5.45

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## French watchdog spikes curbs on immigration

PARIS (R) — France's constitutional council Saturday rejected key provisions of a controversial law to curb immigration and told the conservative government to rewrite them.

The council's ruling, released to the press, censured eight of the law's 52 articles, saying they deprived foreigners of basic rights guaranteed to anyone living on French territory.

There was no immediate reaction from the government. The ruling by the council, which checks that laws conform to the constitution, will force it to review the censured articles.

The law, pushed through parliament last month, is a crucial part of Interior Minister Charles Pasqua's plans to move towards what he has called "zero immigration" and crack down on illegal immigrants.

France has 57.5 million inhabitants, including an estimated 300,000 to one million illegal immigrants, in addition to about four million legal foreign residents.

Welcomed by conservatives and right-wing groups, the law caused an outcry among human rights and anti-racism groups and

was challenged in the constitutional council by Socialist and Communist parliamentarians.

The council declared illegal: — The right of a town mayor to ask a state prosecutor to delay or ban a marriage between a French citizen and a foreigner when it is suspected of being a marriage of convenience to acquire French citizenship. The council said the right to marry was part of individual freedom.

— A provision banning foreign students from bringing their spouse and children to France. The council said this was a basic right for all residents.

— An automatic one-year ban on reentry into France for expelled foreigners. The council said the ban could not be imposed without considering the gravity of the reasons for expulsion.

— The right to detain for three months foreigners who cannot be deported to their own country as they have no identity was in infringement on individual freedom.

— A provision depriving asylum-seekers of the right to appeal after their request had been turned down by administrative authorities.

The council said authorities should be careful not to infringe basic rights and discriminate when implementing other provisions regarding asylum and identity checks.

It was the fourth time in a month that the council partially censured laws passed by the overwhelmingly conservative parliament elected last March.

The watchdog last month rejected clauses of a nationality law under which foreigners or French-born children of foreigners could be denied citizenship if they had been the object of an expulsion or confinement order.

It rejected this month parts of a new criminal procedure code allowing police to hold children under 13 for up to 48 hours and banning suspected terrorists and drug dealers from being assisted by a lawyer while in police custody.

It said that a law making the bank of France independent from the government in line with the Maastricht Treaty could not be implemented until the treaty on European Union had come into effect. The treaty still has to be ratified by Germany.

## U.N. expects Serbs and Muslims to respect pullout

SARAJEVO (R) — The United Nations commander in Bosnia said Saturday he expected both Serb and Muslim forces to respect an agreement for the Serbs to pull their troops off mountain positions surrounding Sarajevo.

General Francis Brigueumont was speaking after a 4 p.m. (1400 GMT) deadline set for Serb forces to withdraw from mountain positions surrounding Sarajevo.

"I hope this night will be calm," he told Reuters Television. "I think both sides intend to respect the pact."

The Serbs promised to pull their troops back from the mountains in an operation that would pave the way for the resumption of stalled Bosnian peace talks in Geneva on Monday.

It was not clear whether the final pullout was complete.



Bosnian Serb military vehicles prepare in front of a hotel on Mount Igman to withdraw from their positions according to the latest Geneva agreements (AFP photo)

## Kashmiri rebels kill 15 bus passengers

NEW DELHI (R) — Muslim Kashmiri separatists killed 15 bus passengers Saturday, the eve of India's independence celebrations, after hijacking the vehicle and picking out their victims, domestic news agencies reported.

They quoted police as saying all 15 people picked out for death belonged to "a particular community."

Indian media do not identify specifically the religious identities of victims of sectarian strife and the phrase meant in this case that the murdered people were Hindus.

The agencies said the bus was on its way to Jammu, the winter capital of India's Jammu and Kashmir state, when it was hijacked by six militants.

They forced the driver to head off the main road to a secluded spot, selected their victims and shot them dead.

Trouble in Jammu and Kashmir was widely anticipated this weekend. Pakistan celebrated its 1947 independence from Britain Saturday and India Sunday.

Since a rebellion against Indian rule broke out in the Kashmir Valley in January 1990, the independence celebrations have been marked by violence.

Most of it has been in Srinagar, the summer capital of the Indian state, where many people fly Pakistani flags on Aug. 14, and demonstrate against Indian rule on Aug. 15.

Witnesses in Srinagar said

security forces were deployed in strength on the city streets Saturday. Some Pakistani flags flew from rooftops in the narrow streets of the old city, but no significant trouble had been reported by midday.

Police and hospitals have reported more than 12,000 deaths in the rebellion, which India blames on Pakistan, saying Islamabad arms, trains and guides the militants. Islamabad denies the charges.

Some militant groups are fighting to join Pakistan which has fought two of its three wars with India over Kashmir and rules one-third of the Himalayan territory. Others want a reunited and independent Kashmir.

## Phnom Penh calls for patience; Khmer Rouge demands talks

PHNOM PENH (AP) — The Cambodian government appealed Saturday to the people to be patient and understanding with its administration as it struggles to guide a country wrecked by two decades of war.

The administration, which took control after U.N.-organised elections this past May, said in a statement that some political forces were trying to destroy the coalition government without thinking of the nation.

But it called on the people to be patient, respect law and order and help prevent the further division of the country.

The statement, which also was read on national television Friday night, was clearly aimed at the Khmer Rouge, which controls about 20 per cent of Cambodia.

The guerrilla group has been attacking the forces of the new national army while objecting to the coalition government comprised of its former battlefield ally, FUNCINPEC, and its nemesis, the previous Vietnamese-installed administration.

The Khmer Rouge has called for FUNCINPEC, which won most seats in the election, to rule alone. And it has called on the people to fight against any elements of the previous administration.

installed by Vietnam in 1978.

The Khmer Rouge considers that administration its enemy because it ousted the guerrilla group from three years of power, during which it killed hundreds of thousands of Cambodians.

The Khmer Rouge then fought alongside the FUNCINPEC Party and a third rebel group for 13 years against the Vietnamese-installed administration until all four factions signed a 1993 peace accord. Only the Khmer Rouge has violated the accord, even boycotting the poll this past May.

The government statement said FUNCINPEC and the Cambodian People's Party of the former Vietnamese-installed administration were cooperating to solve the myriad problems facing Cambodia and noted it was "the first time in two decades of war that we can compromise with honour."

The Khmer Rouge has clearly been sidelined by the new administration.

The government has so far refused to consider the Khmer Rouge's offer to join the new national army and open its territory to the government if made advisors to the administration.

Government officials say the administration wants the Khmer Rouge to first show its sincerity by stopping its attacks on the national armed forces.

On Saturday, the Khmer Rouge demanded on the guerrilla group's radio that the government meet with its leaders to discuss their offer to end the 15-year civil war.

Meanwhile, the co-presidents of the interim government were in Thailand to improve relations with a neighbour that has been the key backer of the guerrillas.

Prince Norodom Ranariddh and Hun Sen met with senior Thai officials Saturday and were scheduled to have an audience with King Bhumibol Adulyadej. A joint communiqué issued Friday avoided the issue of continued involvement by Thai businessmen with the Khmer Rouge or accusations by the United Nations that Thai troops had cooperated with the Khmer Rouge in some border areas.

Instead the communiqué focused on further Thai aid to Cambodia, the opening of permanent border crossing points and cooperation in a number of fields.

The co-presidents are scheduled to return to Cambodia Sunday.

## Pope takes break in Rocky Mountains

DENVER, Colorado (R) — Pope John Paul II took an unusual break Friday, spending a day in the Rocky Mountains before urging young people in Denver to work for peace and justice.

The pontiff addressed his young audience via a television hookup after spending a day in the Rockies, where he hiked, read poetry and prayed, his spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls told reporters.

"Commit yourselves to the struggle for justice, solidarity and peace in the world. Offer your youthful energies and your talents to building a civilisation of

Christian love," he told the youngsters.

He also exhorted them against becoming disheartened by life's troubles.

"Take courage in the face of life's difficulties and injustices," the Pope told young people taking part in the way of the cross commemorating the events between Christ's condemnation to die and his death on the cross.

His address to the young people attending World Youth Day, an international religious gathering, was transmitted by cable to an outdoor stadium from the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.

The Pope was given a pair of white, size 10-1/2 sneakers upon his arrival at a Catholic retreat house in Estes Park, about 60 miles from Denver.

"I think he was very, very happy today," his spokesman said adding he had used a walking stick the children presented to him with a jacket.

The pope seemed to be enjoying the mountain air after the sweltering temperatures in Jamaica and Mexico, the first two legs of his trip.

An avid mountaineer, the Pope was unfazed by the 9,200 foot (2,800 metres) altitude, Card. Navarro-Valls said.

## Documents prove Japan waged germ warfare in China during World War II

TOKYO (R) — Japanese historians have unearthed documents proving what the government has long denied — that the imperial army conducted secret biological warfare in China during World War II, news reports said Saturday.

Shinichi Arai, a professor at Surugadai University, and a research team discovered journals compiled by the notorious Unit 731, which experimented on humans to create biological weapons, in the library of the army's National Institute for Defence, the daily Asahi Shimbun and Kyodo News Agency said.

Prof. Arai could not be reached for comment.

The documents provide grisly details of how Unit 731 waged germ and pest warfare in China, according to the reports.

One account tells of a pilot scattering fleas that had been

contaminated with plague bacilli over Hunan province in November 1941.

Two weeks later, Unit 731 notes that Chinese authorities reported the outbreak of plague in the area.

In another, a senior army medical officer described a plan to use 750,000 Japanese-raised rats to cause disease in China.

The Japanese government has long maintained there is insufficient evidence to back up claims that the unit conducted gruesome experiments on allied prisoners in China up until the end of World War II and that it waged germ warfare.

Last year, another team of Japanese researchers went public with pre-1945 Chinese government documents describing how the imperial army sprayed germ-contaminated fleas over central

China, killing more than 400 people.

Unit 731 was run by Major General Shiro Ishii, a bacteriologist who was never tried as a war criminal by allied forces after Japan's 1945 defeat.

Some historians have said that Ishii and his colleagues were granted immunity by U.S. occupation forces in exchange for research data.

Earlier this month, Japan's outgoing Liberal Democratic Party government finally acknowledged that the imperial army had forced tens of thousands of Asian women to serve as battlefield prostitutes for Japanese soldiers.

Documents proving the existence of such "comfort women" were discovered in late 1991 by Japanese, as they were called in Japanese, Japanese historian in the same army library in Tokyo.

## Lazy postman admits hiding mail to save time

LONDON (R) — A British postman who stole or hid 11,000 postal items because he wanted to have a short day and play golf was jailed for 12 months Friday. Paul Osbourne's actions "defied belief," recorder (Judge) David Roberts said after passing sentence on the postman, who admitted his guilt. "They amount to laziness, a wish to have a short day and go and play golf," the judge said. "That is incredible behaviour." Some of the mail included post due to be delivered at Christmas last year. Prosecutor Julian Ironside told the court. Mr. Osbourne, 24, hid thousands of letters and postal packets in his house, where a search revealed 33 delivery pouches and a refuse sack full of mail. Another 4,700 items were found in the loft, which Mr. Osbourne had forgotten about, Mr. Ironside said. Mr. Osbourne was found out when a colleague discovered a partly-torn refuse sack containing 198 postal packets outside Mr. Osbourne's home in Swindon, 70 miles (110 km) southwest of London.

## Investigation of reputed Hollywood madam widens

LOS ANGELES (R) — A wide-ranging investigation of Hollywood's reputed "madam", the stars, a case which has sent celebrities and studio executives scurrying for cover, has given rise to new allegations of violence and police complicity. Heidi Fleiss, a 27-year-old high school dropout, was reported to have gone into hiding at a Palm Springs, California, villa following her arraignment Monday on charges that she ran a high-priced call girl service catering to the entertainment world. With Ms. Fleiss out of sight, Hollywood — a town that loves a steamy plot line — was buzzing with whispers about star marriages and steller careers that could be broken if the contents of her "black book" are ever revealed. In another strange twist, a condominium owned by Ivan Nagy, Ms. Fleiss's 56-year-old ex-boyfriend and an alleged rival in the high-rent prostitution trade, was sprayed with gunfire earlier this week, police said. The Hungarian-born movie producer, who was not home at the time, appeared on Cable News Network's Larry King Live show Thursday night saying he would not be surprised if Ms. Fleiss's "kick man" — her enforcer — was behind the attack. Mr. Nagy, arrested last week on charges of running his own separate call girl ring, suggested that the intent may have been to intimidate him into silence. Ms. Fleiss, he said, would like him to "go away for two years, disappear." Suspicion has been cast on local police departments amid press reports of investigations into allegations that off-duty officers may have worked as drivers or provided security for Ms. Fleiss.

## Hanoi to get mobile phones

HANOI (R) — Mobile telephones, standard business tools in most Asian cities, are to come this month to Hanoi, one of the continent's last beep-free outposts. In newspaper advertisements Saturday, Vietnam's post office said it was starting an experimental service in the capital in late August. A mobile phone service already operates in Hanoi's Chi Minh City, Vietnam's biggest city and commercial centre.

## Berlin court rules in alleged art forgery case

BERLIN (R) — A Berlin court lifted a gag on an art expert who maintains that the so-called Vienna collection of the late German artist Joseph Beuys is a forgery. The controversy, which critics believe could develop into the biggest art forgery case in post-war Europe, involves more than 100 works its owners say are worth nearly 12 million. The appeals court overturned a lower court decision which muzzled art historian Heiner Bastian from alleging that 28 collages and other works shown at the Brera Academy in Milan, Italy, were fraudulent. It did not rule on their authenticity. Mr. Bastian, a long-time friend of Beuys, a leading figure of the "Arte Povera" movement who died in 1986, visited the Milan exhibit in March and declared in a scathing letter to several institutions that the works were forged. He was sued by Vienna art dealer Julius Hummel, who displayed the works and previously exhibited more than 100 Beuys objects in Tenerife, Canary Islands. Mr. Hummel said Beuys created the works in Vienna between 1976 and 1983. At the centre of the dispute is Oswald Oberhuber, rector of Vienna's School of Applied Art. He authenticated the works and claimed in a declaration to the lower court to have bought some of them from the artist himself. But Mr. Oberhuber later withdrew his testimony.

## Death toll climbs in Thailand hotel collapse

KORAT, Thailand (AP) — Workers rushed to rescue survivors among at least 100 persons still entombed beneath the wreckage of a collapsed, six-story hotel Saturday. The death toll mounted to 59, and was expected to further increase, authorities said.

The hotel, touted as the most luxurious in this provincial capital, collapsed quickly in a heap of concrete and twisted steel rods Friday.

About 350 injuries were reported, although about a fifth of them were minor.

The stretch of death began to spread across the site of the Royal Plaza Hotel as workers toiled under a boiling sun. Police were seen retrieving architectural blueprints from the rear of the collapsed structure.

"We are trying to lift off the hotel's roof today to save anyone who might be alive," said Chatichai Choonhavan, a former

prime minister and native of this commercial centre about 130 miles (200 kilometres) northeast of Bangkok.

Mr. Chatichai, who said poor building methods may have caused the collapse, likened it to a war zone.

"Some are still alive. We can hear their voices," said one rescue worker, passing a bucket of debris to another in a long human chain. Police Major Suchin Mitpanich said at least 100 persons remained buried under the debris but could not estimate how many were still alive.

A provincial coordinating committee, set up Friday, gave the latest death toll at 59.

Bedsheets were strung up to protect workers from the searing tropical sun. Exhausted, some stretched out to catch naps on mattresses from the ruined hotel. One man slept in a bathtub. The rescue teams had worked

through the night, using jackhammers, crowbars, hacksaws and cranes. Sobbing relatives stood by, waiting to learn the fate of people still caught under the rubble.

Among the dead was a U.S. Air Force master sergeant caught under the falling building when he stopped there to send a fax, another U.S. serviceman said Saturday. Police identified him as Lamont Canda and said he was a Filipino-American.

Master Sgt. Larry H. Crismon of Salt Lake City, Utah, said the dead sergeant was part of an air force detachment installing telephone lines at the Korat Royal Thai Air Force Base. The base was used by Americans during the Vietnam War.

Police said they suspected the hotel's collapse was connected to the addition of three top floors in 1990. A police official, Chalong Kingchakaw, said the hotel was being renovated when it col-

lapsed.

Police said they were holding for questioning the hotel owner, architect and an engineer who worked on the additions.

A newspaper report said additional weight may have been placed on the structure after the hotel stocked up additional water supplies in four huge tanks atop the building in anticipation of a water supply cut.

Investigators are to determine whether the extra floors were built illegally, as is often the case in Thailand.

Visiting the scene Friday, Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai noted that some official inspectors are known to take bribes in exchange for approving construction of unsafe buildings. When accidents occur few culprits are ever brought to justice.

"It seems we Thais do not respect regulations and this has resulted in frequent problems," he said.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Bomb injures 5 policemen in Belfast

BELFAST (R) — A car bomb exploded outside a popular restaurant in a predominantly Protestant area of Belfast late Friday, injuring police officers who were trying to clear the area, police said. They said five officers needed treatment for cuts and bruises while several civilians were suffering from shock. The police were evacuating people after a telephone caller warned that a 250-pound (113-kg) bomb had been placed in a car near the Barclay Restaurant. The caller, "trying to represent the Irish Republican Army (IRA), used a code word recognised for such messages. A police spokesman said the call had given only a few minutes notice of the blast, adding that this had been hopelessly inadequate. The IRA is fighting to drive Britain from Northern Ireland. Earlier Friday firebombs believed have been planted by the IRA wrecked four stores in the southern English resort of Bournemouth. No one was reported injured.

### U.S. improves Georgia ties

TBILISI (R) — The United States Friday formally upgraded its economic relations with Georgia Friday, granting the Transcaucasian state "most favoured nation" trading status, Georgia's government press centre said. A press centre representative said U.S. Ambassador Kent Brown met Foreign Minister Alexander Chikvaidze and handed over documents ratified by the U.S. Congress detailing Georgia's new trade status. Five days earlier, a U.S. diplomat alleged to have been working for Washington's Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was shot dead in a car on a bandit-infested road outside the Georgian capital. Mr. Brown told a news conference that U.S. interest in Georgia was high and that the only obstacle to increased investment was concern over security. But he said Washington did not "associate the (CIA) spy's murder with Georgia as a whole." On Wednesday, Georgian leader Eduard Shevardnadze suspended his security chief, Eldar Gogoladze. Mr. Gogoladze had been driving a Ford Woodruff and two women back into Tbilisi after a nightseeing trip when the American was killed.

### ANC repudiates Mokaba comments

JOHANNESBURG (R) — The African National Congress (ANC) has repudiated youth leader Peter Mokaba's call for attacks on President F.W. de Klerk and for the expulsion of security forces from black townships. Law and Order Minister Hensley Kriel said police had begun an enquiry into Mr. Mokaba's angry rhetoric at a funeral Thursday for victims of township violence and a prosecution might follow. Mr. Mokaba triggered a wave of mainly white outrage Thursday when he told black youths at the funeral to drive the army and the police out of the townships "and take the struggle to their areas." When youths greeted him with volleys of pistol and rifle fire, he told them "direct those bullets against De Klerk." He also urged them to take down a migrant-worker hostel dominated by the rival Inkatha Freedom Party "brick by brick." The ANC said in a statement it had never called for the physical dismantling of hostels, which are often dominated by supporters of rival black leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party.

### Italy seeks to restart Karabakh talks

ROME (R) — Italy produced a fresh initiative designed to restart the stalled peace process in the disputed Transcaucasian enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh. An Italian Foreign Ministry statement said warring Armenians and Azeris would be asked to approve a new timetable for the introduction of a ceasefire to end a five-year conflict which has killed thousands. The two ethnic groups are fighting for control of the former Soviet enclave, a region largely peopled by Armenians but administered by Azeris. The initiative follows a meeting in Rome Friday between Armenian and Azeri representatives and nine nations from the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), which have been trying to resolve the conflict since March 1992. The Italians, heading the mediation effort, said the CSCE would send a mission to the region to report on the military and political situation. The statement said the Rome meeting was attended by high level government officials from Armenia and Azerbaijan plus repre-

sentatives of the two communities from Nagorno-Karabakh. It added the conflict had created more than a million refugees — more than 750,000 in Azerbaijan and at least 300,000 in Armenia. Iran Thursday warned Armenia to pull forces out of Azerbaijan, saying it could not remain indifferent to aggression close to its own borders.

### 'Access to N. Korea plants not enough'

VIENNA (R) — The United Nations watchdog said Friday North Korea was still restricting access to two suspect atomic sites and an agreement on full inspections appeared to be deadlocked. A team of experts from the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) returned from a week-long visit to North Korea Thursday and said they were only allowed to carry out maintenance work on monitoring equipment at the plants in Yongbyon. "We are not getting the kind of satisfactory access required to move our inspections procedures ahead," IAEA spokesman David Kyd told Reuters. "That process is stymied for the time being." he added. North Korea's Stalinist government agreed after talks with the United States last month to allow IAEA experts to resume inspections. Pyongyang softened its position after four months of tense negotiations following its unprecedented move in March to withdraw from the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, blocking further IAEA checks.

### China blames West for corruption

PEKING (AP) — China's Communist Party chief has linked the nation's growing corruption with Western influences, and plans to launch a major crackdown later this month, a pro-Peking newspaper in Hong Kong reported Saturday. Party General Secretary "Jiang Zemin believes that at no time have a few Western forces stopped practicing peaceful evolution on us, creating chaos in people's minds and disrupting the building of socialism," the Wen Wei Po said. "Peaceful evolution" refers to a supposed plot in the West to gradually undermine socialism in China by introducing Western ideas. The charge was levelled frequently in the conservative backlash following the crackdown on the 1989 pro-democracy movement, but has rarely been invoked in the past year, as the nation turned its focus from political issues to economic ones. The newspaper reported Mr. Jiang as saying that China must oppose peaceful evolution, total Westernisation and corruption at all times. It said the party leadership has agreed to launch a major anti-corruption crackdown on Aug. 20 and are determined to crack some big cases in the next six months.

### Amnesty fears for Timor rebel leader

JAKARTA (R) — Human rights group Amnesty International said Saturday it remained concerned about jailed East Timorese rebel leader Xanana Gusmao despite Indonesia's reduction of his life sentence. In a statement from its London headquarters, Amnesty said the reduction of Mr. Xanana's imprisonment to 20 years, announced Friday, was designed to appease the international community. Indonesia has barred family and Red Cross visits to Xanana since his trial ended in May, Amnesty said. "Amnesty International has remained seriously concerned about the health of Xanana Gusmao throughout his detention," it said. Mr. Xanana, 47, who headed a Fretilin guerrilla army fighting Indonesian rule in East Timor until his capture last November, was sentenced after a three-month trial. Amnesty has called the trial a farce.

### Jamaica finance minister quits

KINGSTON, Jamaica (R) — Jamaican Finance Minister Hugh Small has resigned his cabinet post following reports of fiscal and monetary policy differences with the ruling People's National Party. A statement issued by the office of Prime Minister P.J. Patterson said Mr. Small submitted his resignation after he refused to lead a government policy review requested by the cabinet. The cabinet had expressed concern over the impact of several new policy initiatives. Under International Monetary Fund guidance recent changes in Jamaica's foreign exchange system have led to a 12 per cent devaluation, and government's tighter monetary controls have pushed interest rates upwards of 55 per cent.



# Agassi overcomes Stich, Sampras advances to quarters

MASON, Ohio (R) — Andre Agassi had no problem doing what he had to do to win his first match of the ATP Championship Series on Friday, calling his opponent a "great warm-up" match. Agassi, who had lost to Michael Stich in the first round of the Wimbledon Championships, defeated the German 6-3, 6-2, 6-1 in a match that put him in the quarterfinals of the \$1.65 million ATP Championship Series.

On paper, the unseeded, 28th-ranked Agassi's 6-3, 6-2, 6-1 quarterfinal win over the fourth-seeded, 12th-ranked Stich was an upset. Stich, who had won the fourth round of Wimbledon, had beaten the unseeded, 24th-ranked Agassi in the first round of the ATP Championship Series. Stich, who had won the fourth round of Wimbledon, had beaten the unseeded, 24th-ranked Agassi in the first round of the ATP Championship Series.

Top seed Pete Sampras, the defending champion, breezed through his quarterfinal match against the 202nd-ranked Steve Bryan, defeating him 6-4, 6-0 in one hour in his quarterfinal match.

Thursday's total rain-out of the match between the 10th-ranked Sampras and the 202nd-ranked Bryan meant that the quarterfinal matches were both played on Friday.

The semifinals will pit Agassi against seventh-seeded fellow American Michael Chang and Sampras against third-seeded Stefan Edberg of Sweden. Agassi leads Chang 5-1 in career meetings, while Edberg leads Sampras 4-3.

Edberg beat American Brad Gilbert 6-4, 6-2 and Chang defeated Australian Jason Stoltenberg 7-6 (7-3), 5-7, 6-3 in their quarterfinals.

Agassi's low ranking made this event the first since October 1987's of a player who has won Wimbledon, but has never won the ATP Championship Series.

Agassi, who started the day with a 7-5, 6-1 third-round victory over American Doug Flach, spent a total of two hours, 33 minutes on-court in his two matches.

"In a situation like this you have to be a little bit more comfortable," said Agassi. "You don't want the first match to take too much out of you. I handled it perfectly. It was a great warm-up match."

In his second match, Agassi played decisive tennis, keeping the normally serve-and-volleying

# Seles' attacker charged

HAMBURG, Germany (AP) — The man who stabbed Monica Seles in April and knocked her out of tennis competition has been charged with causing grievous bodily harm, authorities said Friday.

Seles, 19, has been undergoing rehabilitation in Vail, Colorado, at the Steadman-Hawkins Clinic, and will be unable to defend her U.S. Open title at the end of August, it was announced Thursday.

The prosecutors' office in Hamburg, where Seles was competing when she was stabbed by a man who said he wanted German Grand Slam winner Steffi Graf to return to the top of the Women's Tennis Association rankings, said the suspect Guenter P. was charged on Thursday. The suspect's full name has not been released, as is often the case in German law.

The 38-year-old man from Thuringia state in eastern Germany will not be prosecuted for the more serious charge of attempted manslaughter. Prosecutors said last week that Seles had not permitted her doctors to provide detailed information about her wound, and that prevented the prosecutor from filing the more serious charge.

Conviction for attempted manslaughter would likely bring a minimum prison sentence of five years, while the charge of causing grievous bodily harm has a maximum sentence of five years.

The suspect, who remains under arrest, is accused of stabbing Seles in the back as she sat during a changeover between games during a tournament in Hamburg April 30.

Seles was the WTA's two-ranked player, but since then Graf has taken over the lead, winning the French Open and Wimbledon.

# World Athletics Championships 1st gold medal goes to Finland

STUTTGART (AP) — Sari Essayah of Finland won the first gold medal of the World Championships Saturday, while American sprinter Andre Cason posted the fastest time in the 100-metre heats.

Essayah won the women's 10-kilometre walk in 42 minutes and 59 seconds, just off the championship record of 42:57. It was the first major victory for the 26-year-old Essayah, who finished third at the 1991 World Championships and fourth at the 1992 Olympics.

Essayah surged into the lead after the halfway point when the leader, Madelein Svensson of Sweden, was disqualified for an infraction — most likely running.

Ilana Salvador of Italy took the silver in 43:08, with Encarnacion Granados of Spain winning the bronze in 43:21.

Russian athletes, who won the event at the two previous World Championships, finished off the medals this time. The top Russian finisher was Yelena Nikolayeva, who finished seventh.

In the men's 100, all the top names advanced with ease to the second round. Cason, the U.S. champion, led the way with a time of 10.09 seconds.

Carl Lewis, seeking a fourth straight world title in the 100, had the second best time of 10.15. Nigeria's Daniel Effiong, Bruny Surin of Canada and Raymond Stewart of Jamaica all ran 10.23, while Olympic champion Linford Christie of Britain posted 10.24.

Dennis Mitchell of the United States ran a 10.26 and Frankie Fredericks of Namibia, silver medalist in Barcelona, finished in 10.32.

"I'm just going out and running my race," Cason said. "I had a mediocre start. My reaction was good, but some of my mechanics were off. I feel I can improve my time."

Lewis, who has failed to win at 100 metres this season, said he was bothered by three false starts in his heat.

"They rattled everyone," he said. "I didn't react very well, but I felt as good as ever running-wise."

Christie declined to speak with reporters.

"The talking is finished," he said. "This is where the business starts."

Second-round qualifying in the 100 was scheduled for Saturday evening, with the final on Sunday night.

In the men's 400, the three top favourites — all Americans — coasted through the first round. World record-holder Butch Reynolds, who missed the Barcelona Olympics due to a drug suspension, won his heat in 45.34.

Michael Johnson, unbeaten in the 400 since 1989, captured his heat in 45.60, and Olympic champion Quincy Watts eased up and finished second in his heat at 45.94.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

**Algeria expelled from African Nations' Cup**  
CAIRO (R) — The African Soccer Federation has expelled Algeria from the finals of the African Nations' Cup for fielding a player who was under suspension, a federation statement said Saturday. The statement said Algeria would be considered to have lost their January 10 match with Senegal because Mourad Karoui played while he still had one match of a two-match suspension to serve. This meant Senegal instead of Algeria would qualify for the finals of the Biennial Cup, due to be held in Tunis next March. Ivory Coast are the defending champions.

**Evans shrugs aside Barcelona setback**  
KOBE (R) — Triple world record holder Janet Evans, unbeaten in 400 metres freestyle since 1986 — Barcelona Olympics excepted — swept to an easy victory in the finals of the Pan Pacific Swimming Championships Saturday. Evans, record holder at 400, 800 and 1,500 metres freestyle, won in four minutes 07.47 seconds to help dispel her 1992 setback when she was toppled in Spain by German outsider Dagmar Hase. "I cannot remember how many (400 metres) golds I have as I don't count, but Barcelona is the only one I didn't get going back to 1986," the American told reporters. Promising Costa Rican Claudia Poll, who won the 200 metres freestyle final Thursday, finished second in 4:09.61. Australia's Kieren Perkins, men's freestyle world record holder at 800 and 1,500, added 400 gold to Thursday's 800 victory, breaking the Pan Pacific record in 3:49.43.

**Ukrainian runner banned for drug use**  
STUTTGART (AP) — Lyudmila Dzhigalova, a 400-metre runner from Ukraine, has been banned for four years after testing positive for steroids, the IAAF said Saturday. Dzhigalova failed an out-of-competition test in Kiev, Ukraine, on July 31, said International Amateur Athletic Federation spokeswoman Jayne Pearce. "She has been suspended for four years pending a hearing with her national federation," Pearce said. Dzhigalova, 31, had been entered in the 400 and the 4-x-400 relay at the World Championships, which opened in Stuttgart Saturday. Her ban takes immediate effect, ruling her out of the Championships. Dzhigalova finished second in the 400 metres at the 1987 World University Games and the 1990 Goodwill Games. She won a gold medal at the 1992 Olympics as part of the 4-by-400 relay team representing the Unified Team of former Soviet republics.

**Former World Cup greets promotional tour**  
NEW YORK (AP) — Pele and other former World Cup stars such as Rivelino, Gordon Banks and Geoff Hurst will take part in Soccer Blast USA, a 36-city touring festival. The one-day events began Saturday in Boston and will run through Dec. 19, the day of the World Cup draw. Soccer Blast USA, sponsored by Mastercard and Procter and Gamble, will visit 25 states. Besides the World Cup stars, U.S. national team players Peter Vermes, Desmond Armstrong and Michelle Akery-Stahl, will participate in various activities, including shooting contests against a mechanical goalkeeper and 5-on-5 games with amateur players. The shooting contests will offer prizes to goal scorers. Pele will be on hand for approximately 10 events and drawings will be held for free copies of his instructional video. He also will sign autographs, as will Vermes, Armstrong and Akery-Stahl, who led the United States to the women's world championship in 1991.

# Prost cautious after winning provisional pole

MOGYOROD, Hungary (AP) — Alain Prost was more than half a second better than the rest of the field Friday, winning the provisional pole but not by enough to make him comfortable after his first qualifying session for the Hungarian Grand Prix.

"I think the track is going to change quite a lot over the course of the weekend," he said after driving his Williams-Renault around the 4.968-kilometre (2.465-mile) Hungaroring Circuit in one minute, 45.488 seconds. "We have to be careful about the conditions and the state of the track."

Prost, looking for his eighth victory of the year and fifth in a row, averaged 189.488 kph (117.584 mph), easily beating Germany's Michael Schumacher, who drove his Benetton-Ford to a time of 1:16.003.

Damon Hill, the hard-luck Briton who has been fouled by mechanical and tyre failure while leading the last two races in Germany and Hungary, was next in 1:16.135.

Schumacher, who finished second two weeks ago in Hockenheim, was happy about his car's setup, especially going into Saturday's second session.

"We've had some specific traction control problems in the last few races, and I feel now that we have 99 per cent solved those problems," he said.

Hill battled with his brakes early in the morning practice but his mechanics had them working properly by the start of qualifying.

"I tried hard, but I had some problems, not least when I came to a stop on one car spinning," he said. "He had just lost it, and I just avoided him."

# IAAF sticks with 4-year bans

STUTTGART (AP) — Despite the risk of further legal conflicts, the governing body for track and field this week upheld its hard-line penalties for drug use.

The International Amateur Athletic Federation rejected proposals for more lenient sanctions and stuck to its automatic four-year suspension for use of steroids and other performance-enhancing substances.

The IAAF increased the ban from two years to four years in 1991. A second violation results in a life expulsion.

The German track federation, its hand forced by the contested drug suspension of Katrin Krabbe, proposed a flexible system of penalties.

First, the Germans proposed that first-time violators receive a suspension of between one and four years, depending on the degree of guilt. They later suggested a ban of between two and four years, and four years to life for a second offense.

Finally, the Germans were forced to withdraw their proposals after the overwhelming majority of IAAF members spoke against them.

"It would be a mistake to reduce the penalty to the lowest common denominator," said British delegate David Bedford, who spearheaded the introduction of the four-year ban in 1991.

Helmut Digel, president of the German track federation, complained that only 10 of the 194 countries involved in the debate were truly aware of the problems.

### GORREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMMAM HIRSHI  
TAMMAM HIRSHI INC.

### HASTE MAKES WASTE

Neither vulnerable. South deals.  
NORTH  
K 8 5 3  
Q 10 9 6  
7 4 2  
8 5  
WEST EAST  
Q J 10 7 6 A 9 4  
K J 10 5 2  
Q 10 4 3 K J 6 2  
SOUTH  
A Q J 8 7 3  
A 9 8  
A 9 7

The bidding:  
South West North East  
1 1 1 1  
Pass Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: Queen of ♠  
"Flying fingers" is a disease that afflicts many bridge players. Its symptom is playing in the first trick before thoroughly mapping out the campaign.

In days of yore, North's free raise to two hearts on a balanced hand containing two kings would have been frowned upon in the best circles. These days, any hand containing four-card support for opener's major and a smattering of points is

### CAR FOR SALE

Duty Unpaid, 1984, BMW 520i, in excellent condition.  
For more information pls. call Tel.: 687224

### FOR RENT

Ground floor fully-furnished apartment with garden and garage in Jabal Amman Fourth Circle area, near Al Khalidi Hospital. Three bedrooms, salon and dining, sitting room, and all facilities.  
Please call 642789 between 9 a.m.-2 p.m. and 4-7 p.m.

### DAR AL DAWA دار الدواء

DAR AL DAWA CO. is seeking to employ a competent secretary in their offices in Shmeisani, opposite King Abdullah Gardens:

- Jordanian, preferably university graduate.
- Fluent in Arabic and English (French is an asset)
- Operates computer
- Minimum experience 2 years in secretarial work.

Candidate please send C.V. and recent photo to:  
P.O. Box 9364 or fax 683199, Amman.

### RANGE ROVER 89 FOR SALE

In excellent condition, brown metallic, automatic gear, air-condition, full options, foreign plates, mileage 29500 km.  
Interested call 685876 between 9 a.m. and 8 p.m.

### FURNISHED APARTMENT FOR RENT

Independent 2nd floor in a villa. Consisting of two bedrooms, three bathrooms, living room, dining room, salon, modern kitchen. The apartment has a separate entrance, private garage, solar heating and garden, area 200m<sup>2</sup>. Location: Al Rabieh  
Tel: 681614

### FURNISHED APARTMENT FOR RENT

First Floor, New Furniture  
2 bedrooms, salon, 2 bathrooms, living room, dining room, laundry room and 3 verandas. Central heating, telephone.  
Location: Amman-Shmeisani, opposite the European Community mission.  
Call at 688083 between (1-6) p.m. (8:30-10) p.m.

### INTERESTING SALE OPPORTUNITY

A family announces the selling of some of its various oriental household wares. Chinese dining room 6 p. Chinese vases and porcelain items with cabinet. Frames with mother of pearl and mirrors. Paintings, new and old silver household ware, antique gun with silver. Electrical items, etc.  
For contact, call 835457  
3 days from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

### For Sale

- Acer 386 SX-16MHz
- 2MB RAM, 40 MB Hard.
- 3.5 & 5 1/4" FDD-HD.
- VGA Color display
- Mouse, Keyboard
- Acer laser printer

(Price: 1650 J.D.) Tel.: 690431

### FURNISHED ROOF FOR RENT

GARDENS ST.  
Tel : 673425 - 776838 Dr. Siam

### FURNISHED APARTMENT FOR RENT

IN UM UTHAINA  
Three bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, sitting and dining room, luxurious furniture, in a modern and new building, with telephone and independent central heating, suitable for a diplomat.  
Call tel. 820259

### WANTED

A TRADING COMPANY IS LOOKING FOR FEMALE SALES REPRESENTATIVES TO HIRE IN THE FIELD OF LOCAL SALES. A CAR IS AN ADDED ADVANTAGE.  
CALL 648171 / 648182. APPOINTMENTS ON MONDAY 16th AND TUESDAY 17th OF AUGUST ONLY

### CONCORD

1) Bruce Willis in  
**HUDSON HAWK**  
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

2) Kim Basinger & Richard Gere in  
**CONCORD "2"**  
**FINAL ANALYSIS**  
Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

### PLAZA

Adel Imam in  
**Wad Sayyed Al Shaghal**  
play (Arabic)  
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:30

### PHILADELPHIA

**INDOCHINE**  
Shows: 12:30, 3:15, 6:15, 9 p.m.  
On Thursday and Friday special show for children at 11 a.m. a festival of cartoons.

### Nabil Al Mashni Theatre

Coming soon:  
**Fuad Shomaly**  
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In the popular comedy:  
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### AHLAN THEATRE

Returns to you Thursday Aug. 26 in the play:  
**Arab Summit Conference**



## NEWS IN BRIEF

## Rebels fight navy in Sri Lanka lagoon

COLOMBO (R) — Tamil guerrillas exchanged fire with navy patrols in a disputed lagoon separating the rebel-controlled northern Jaffna peninsula from mainland Sri Lanka early Saturday, residents said. They said the shooting erupted when the rebels were returning to Jaffna after escorting a convoy of boats carrying about 2,000 Jaffna residents to the mainland. "We don't know if there were any casualties," said a resident who reached Vavuniya, the northernmost town under government control. "We heard the sound of battle." The military has banned traffic across the Jaffna Lagoon to prevent its use by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam rebels, fighting for independence in the island's north and east.

## Russia condemns Ukrainian statements

MOSCOW (AP) — Ukraine is violating pledges to become nuclear-free by claiming the START I nuclear arms treaty allows it to keep SS-24 long-range missiles, a Russian official said Friday. "The SS-24 missiles are not excluded from the START I treaty," said Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Mikhail Demurin. "Such statements represent a deliberate falsification of facts and international agreements." Former Soviet nuclear arms are still scattered across Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan. All except Ukraine have ratified the 1991 U.S.-Soviet START I treaty. International experts have said the strategic arms reduction treaty and related protocols — once ratified by all parties — would leave Russia as the only nuclear power among the former Soviet republics. But Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk last month offered a new reading of the accord, saying it allowed his country to keep 46 of the SS-24 missiles. He proposed a special treaty between the United States, Ukraine and Russia on the destruction of the missiles, which are capable of carrying 10 warheads each.

## 'Black death' reported in CIS

MOSCOW (R) — A case of "black death" has been diagnosed in Kazakhstan, the latest in a series of horrible diseases thought to have been eradicated this century that have resurfaced in the former Soviet Union. Postfactum News Agency said a woman had been taken to hospital in Kazakhstan's Kyzyl-Ordinsk region with Bubonic plague, the black death which in the 14th century killed as much as three quarters of the population of Europe and parts of Asia. Symptoms include high fever, chills, painful swellings in the groin and haemorrhages that turn black. The agency quoted doctors as saying the woman caught the acutely-infectious disease after cutting up the body of a hare which her husband had brought home from a hunting trip. Vladimir Kim, deputy head of the local epidemic centre, told Postfactum that 119 people who had been in contact with the woman were being kept under medical observation. Diseases which were once almost eradicated are reappearing as the former Soviet state health system crumbles. They include cholera, diphtheria and malignant anthrax. Russia's sanitary and epidemics service said it had registered 17 cases of cholera in the past six weeks, either brought in from the Indian sub-continent or caused by poor quality drinking water at home. Diphtheria is also on the rise.

## Sierra Leone troops recapture towns

FREETOWN (R) — Sierra Leone troops have recaptured two eastern towns held by rebels for two years, an army officer said Friday. Lieutenant-Colonel Kess Boya said his men took the towns of Ciehun and Baidindi on Aug. 11, injuring three rebels of Foday Sankoh's Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and suffering one wounded on their side. The RUF invaded eastern Sierra Leone in March 1991, with the help of Charles Taylor's rebels in neighbouring Liberia, and took control of a number of towns in the border country. Col. Boya said the RUF still held the district capital of Kailahun but his men were making progress. "We are with the hope that the war will soon come to an end in the eastern and southern regions of the country," he told Reuters.

## Cuban pastors join U.S. protest

HAVANA (R) — Three Cuban clergymen began a hunger strike in solidarity with colleagues in Texas who want the U.S. trade embargo against Cuba lifted. The clergymen, one a member of Cuba's National Assembly, began the fast in front of the U.S. interests section in Havana. They said they were supporting 13 clergymen fasting in Laredo, Texas, to protest the ban on delivery of a school bus to Cuba. "We want to express our solidarity with our brothers there (in the United States)," the Reverend Raul Suarez, a Baptist pastor, told reporters. He was accompanied in the protest vigil outside the seafarers U.S. diplomatic building in Havana by the Reverend Juan Ramon De La Paz the Reverend Nerva Cot, both Episcopalians. In Laredo members of the Minneapolis-based religious group Pastors For Peace are in the 16th day of a hunger strike to protest the refusal by U.S. customs officials to allow a yellow school bus to leave U.S. territory.

## Taiwan asks U.N. to reconsider

TAIPEI (AP) — Taiwan, looking to end its international isolation, said Saturday that the United Nations should reconsider its decision to exclude Taiwan. A Foreign Ministry statement said the U.N.'s decision to admit Communist China in 1971, forcing Taiwan to give up its U.N. seat, was a "product of the cold war." "The United Nations should review this issue in the post-cold war era to protect the rights of (Taiwan's) 20.8 million people," the statement said. Recently, Taiwan has begun lobbying to return to the United Nations, arguing that as the world's 14th largest trading nation it is too economically important to be isolated. Taiwan's Nationalist government fled here after defeat at the hands of Mao Tse-tung's Communists in 1949. China regards Taiwan as a renegade province and has vigorously opposed Taiwanese moves to rejoin the United Nations.

## Italian police arrest top mafia boss

ROME (R) — Italian police arrested one of the country's most wanted mafia suspects after raiding a yacht off the island of Capri, state television reported. The reports said 38-year-old Felice Maniero was detained with eight other people on the vessel off the coast of the popular southern holiday island. Mr. Maniero, who faces accusations of criminal association and drug trafficking, had been a fugitive for more than two years. From the northeastern city of Venice, Mr. Maniero is believed to have close links with the Sicilian mafia. Police in Italy have scored a string of spectacular successes in the battle against organised crime recently.

## 4 story building collapses in S. Korea

SEOUL (AP) — A four-story building of shops and offices collapsed Saturday in downtown Pusan, South Korea's second largest city, killing at least one person, a news report said. Dozens of people raced from the building screaming moments before the building tilted and collapsed in rubble, said the national Yonhap News Agency. Soo Young-Mi, a 16-year-old high school student and the daughter of the owner of a restaurant on the first floor, was pulled from beneath the debris but died at the hospital, Yonhap said. An unidentified pedestrian in her 30s suffered serious injuries when she was hit by chunks of falling debris, Yonhap said. An automobile parked at the curb was crushed, it said.

## China orders stricter control of news

PEKING (R) — Tightening its vice-like grip on the news media, China has issued new orders requiring all groups to register news conference and strictly banning any leaks of "party and national secrets". The state council edict instructs news conference to "focus on the country's reform and opening-up, economic development and other major issues closely related to the people", the official Xinhua News Agency said at the weekend.

## Egyptian court clears 24 of murder charge, blasts police

CAIRO (Agencies) — A special security court acquitted 24 alleged Muslim extremists Saturday on charges they killed the speaker of Egypt's parliament. The chief judge blasted police for torturing confessions from the defendants.

Ten defendants, including one fugitive, were convicted of lesser weapons and other charges and sentenced to prison for terms at hard labour up to 15 years. In finding everybody innocent of the Oct. 12, 1990, assassination of Parliament Speaker Rifaat Al Mahjoub, Chief Judge Wahid Mahmoud Ibrahim noted that none of 100 prosecution witnesses identified any of the defendants.

Additionally, he said, "none of the defendants have escaped torture. Medical reports showed that they were subjected to the ugliest forms of torture, including electric shock, hanging by the arms, blindfolding and handcuffing."

"The (Egyptian) judiciary's conscience rejects the police's use of these ugly methods. The acts of the security authorities reflect their shortcomings in discovering proof."

Western governments and human rights organisations contend that Egyptian investigators routinely use torture in amassing evidence, especially against accused Islamic extremists.

But while defendants often complain of torture to courts trying them, such an outburst by a judge is unusual. Torture is seldom given as a reason for acquitting people.

The state-owned Middle East News Agency, quoting a judicial source, reported that prosecutors may ask for a retrial before another court on grounds of legal errors. The report did not specify what type of errors would nullify the verdict. The agency's report did not mention the judge's torture criticism.

The verdict was a blow for the government which has resorted to the courts as a key weapon in its battle against Muslim militants plotting to overthrow it and set up a purist Islamic state.

The eight-judge panel cleared all the defendants of the murder of Mr. Mahjoub, who was gunned down with five others outside a luxury hotel, and instead accused the police of extracting confessions by torture.

"The conscience of Egyptian justice rejects that the police use all these ugly forms of torture. The court does not admit any evidence from the defendants extracted under torture," Judge Ibrahim told the packed and tense court.

Mr. Mahjoub was the most important Egyptian to be assassinated since President Anwar Sadat was killed in 1981.

The judge said medical reports showed that none of the 16 defendants in court escaped torture. Some who had confessed to planning the murder had been given electric shocks in their genitals, hung upside down, and severely whipped.

Some had been partially paralysed by the torture. The judge said security forces resorted to torture to extract confessions "to justify their ineptness and impotence in catching the real culprits."

Fundamentalists praised the verdict but an Egyptian official said it proved that judges were being intimidated by militants and that President Hosni Mubarak was right to transfer militant cases to military courts to ensure harsh and swift punishment.

"The verdict is a farce. It is a real joke. If someone was found pickpocketing he would have been jailed for more than this," one official told Reuters.

This proves the government was right when it transferred militants to military courts because the judges are scared the militants would cut their throat if they convict them. This verdict will call for more trials in military courts," he said.

Bahaddin Hassan from the Egyptian Organisation for Human Rights (EOHR) said the judge's statement was the strongest evidence that torture was used in Egypt and that the security authorities could no longer deny it.

The court sentences, after a leisurely trial lasting over two years, were in stark contrast to those handed down by special military courts set up by Mr. Mubarak last year, which have sentenced 21 militants to death over the past six months.

Relatives cheered, ululated and cried for joy at the verdicts. Some screamed "Allahu Akbar"

and fundamentalist lawyers praised the "honest and objectivity" of the Egyptian judiciary. "The Egyptian judiciary has cleared the shame of Egyptian justice and highlighted the injustice of the military courts. This is a victory to Islam," militant leader Safwat Abdul Ghani told Reuters exultantly.

The judge said: "The Egyptian judiciary does not try people for their ideology and beliefs even if their ideology opposes the ruling government. These people have asked for the application of the Sharia law which conforms with the constitution."

Mr. Abdul Ghani, leader of the political wing in the Gama'a Al Islamiya (Islamic Group) fundamentalist organisation was jailed for five years with hard labour for possessing bullets and forging official papers. He is also standing trial for the killing of anti-fundamentalist writer Farag Foda.

Mamdouh Yousef, leader of the group's military wing, was jailed for seven years.

The judge said forensic proofs contradicted confused evidence given by prosecution witnesses. Out of over 100 prosecution witnesses, none could conclusively identify the defendants as the culprits.

The government had mounted a campaign against the militants who have attacked foreign tourists, Christians and police since March last year. More than 175 people have been killed and over 300 wounded in militant-related violence.

One slogan that arose from the defendant's cage referred to the U.S.-based spiritual guide to Al Gama'a.

"Oh, Omar Abdul Rahman, you are the one who rocks the throne of tyranny. Tell everybody about us. Egypt is going to be ruled by the Koran."

The trial opened in June 1991 in the same suburban courtroom, a converted theatre at a fair-ground, in which Sheikh Abdul Rahman and other fundamentalists were tried for the 1981 coup attempt that followed the assassination of President Sadat. Sheikh Abdul Rahman, now fighting extradition from the United States, was acquitted.

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Israel said on Friday it would continue talking to Palestinian peace negotiators even though they were appointed to senior PLO positions.

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"It was a few months ago. It is not interesting and it is not news," Ms. Aloni told Reuters.

The confirmation comes as the Jewish state edges closer to breaking its policy against direct talks with the PLO which it has said is a "terrorist" group bent on the destruction of Israel.

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